



DIS

THE BEST POEMS OF 1924



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THE BEST POEMS OF 1924

EDITED BY

L. A. G. STRONG

Author of "Dublin Days"

Editor of "The Best Poems of 1923"



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A companion volume to *Best poems of 1923* (*Booklist*, 20:293, My 24)
The preface contains an interesting and enlightening digest of some of
the conflicting criticisms which the first anthology aroused and corrects
some of the serious errors contained in the 1923 volume. A representative
collection. Indexes by first line and author, none by title.

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The Editor of the *Fugitive*,
The Editor of the *Golden Hind*,
The Editor of the *Irish Statesman*,
The Editor of the *Liberator*,
The Editor of *Life and Letters*,
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The Editor of the *New Republic*,
The Editor of the *Observer*,

The Editor of *Palms*,
The Editor of *Poetry*,
The Editor of *Rhythmus*,
The Editor of the *Saturday Review*,
The Editor of the *Spectator*,
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INTRODUCTION

I. AN APOLOGY FOR ERRORS

This year's number, alas, must be prefaced by an abject apology. Owing to a number of unforeseen and accidental circumstances, which it would be useless to relate in detail, I was not sent proofs of *THE BEST POEMS OF 1923*.

In consequence, three serious errors were made in the text, which would have been impossible if proofs had been sent to me. A poem by Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie and a poem by Mr. Conrad Aiken were fused into one, and the whole ascribed to Mr. Aiken. Mr. Aiken's own poem appeared in full: Mr. Abercrombie's, which was made to follow immediately after it, was shorn of its introductory lines.

As if this were not enough, Miss Muriel Stuart's poem, "In the Orchard," appeared minus its second page, little more than the first half surviving.

Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Aiken and Miss Stuart have all shown a degree of kindness and forbearance for which the publishers and I cannot be sufficiently grateful: and, as far as lay in our power, we have done our best to repair the errors. The edition containing the fusion of Mr. Aiken with Mr. Abercrombie was at once called in and destroyed, and a new edition issued in which the poems appeared correctly.

The mutilation of Miss Stuart's poem was

brought to our notice too late to share in this revision, so she has generously allowed us to make the only amends we can; to apologize most humbly for the mistake, and to reprint in this issue the full text of the injured poem.

Once again, on behalf of the publishers and myself, I offer all three poets the humblest of apologies, and thank them most sincerely and gratefully for their kindness.

II. A NOTE UPON THE SAID ERRORS

Fortunately, the results of this misprint were not as serious — from a public point of view — as they might have been.

Only two critics, Mr. John Gould Fletcher and the eagle-eyed Mr. Louis Untermeyer, noticed that anything was amiss at all. Only one let himself go upon "Mr. Aiken's later manner."

Moreover — though the subject is still far too painful to joke about — there was a certain mordant humour about the printing of the whole poem under the title of "The House."

III. CONCERNING PRINCIPLES

With regard to the principle upon which poems are selected, there is little to add to what I said in the last number. The test employed is solely that of pleasure: but this by no means implies, as one reviewer seemed to think, a desire to disarm serious criticism. On the contrary, pleasure can be the most exacting test of all. Mr. Ralph Hodgson has said it is the only test by which he judges his own work; and what more merciless self-critic can modern literature show us?

It is obvious, however, that a representative anthology, covering a limited period, cannot be

compiled upon a very ascetic standard. Still if its compiler be unable to find pleasure in the insincere, the imitative, or the careless, the field is drastically narrowed. If, furthermore, he clings to the notion that one good verse is not enough to make a poem, or that an idea is worth no more words than are needed to present it, he will find himself with quite a manageable handful of verse from which to make his final choice.

What, then, gives pleasure? I suppose the answer is Life — some individual power of personality or thought. Certainly not a suave technique, alone: nor any one subject for its own sake: but the elusive quality that succeeds in being remembered, as we remember a personality or a face.

The anthologist, as I said last year, has a number of small compromises to make. He cannot let his own taste ride him altogether. He cannot get every poem he wants. He is a collector of poems, not of poets. He must try, throughout his heterogeneous collection, to preserve the peculiar quality or gesture of the year's verse. He is the fortunate critic whose public duty is only to commend. He is the rare historian who lets facts speak for themselves. And, though he knows he cannot entirely please anyone else, he may not altogether please himself.

IV. SOME INDISCREET ADMISSIONS

The reception of last year's volume was far better than I had dared to hope. Wherefore, since confession is good for the soul, and often amusing to the listener, I may as well admit at once that the book was undertaken and completed in less than a month, and that, practically speaking, I

had no previous knowledge of American verse at all. The idea of offering the book to me was to get an entirely fresh reaction to an unknown field of literature. The short time in which I had to acquire and read the files of the magazines, choose the poems, set up the manuscript, and conduct the necessary enormous correspondence — all in such hours as my regular profession left free — was a part of no deliberate plan, but the result of mischance.

Naturally any poem, to be included under such conditions of difficulty and haste, needed to possess a great deal of vigor wherewith to make the requisite impression. There was no fear of my playing for safety and going out for names, as, apart from some four or five American poets, I did not know for what names to look. The collection, therefore, whatever its defects and merits, was a genuine quick reaction to current verse. My own background was classical and traditional, with a veneration for the Irish school; yet this, I was glad to find, did not prevent Mr. Kreymborg, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Wallace Stevens, and others of the moderns, from making their immediate and powerful appeal. I am glad, because the accusation of conservatism and traditionalism is so often levelled against English poets and critics, and it was pleasant to find that a thoroughly conservative taste was not a bar to an appreciation of modern verse.

For this year I shall have no excuses on the score of haste. My choices have been carefully and anxiously made. The result is perhaps a less lively collection, but one in which the more thoughtful qualities in modern verse are uppermost. It is difficult to speak at present, before I

am sure of my permissions: but Mr. Graves' poem, Mr. Bax's, Mr. John Crowe Ransom's two, the third of Mr. Eden Phillpott's "Miniatures," Mr. Robin Flower's "The Wanderer"—to name only a few—are all "things to rejoice at." And there are a good many more.

V. OF IMPRESSIONS LEFT ON THE MIND

There are fewer long poems this year than last; and, in American papers, an even greater crop of sonnets. It is almost as if the mass of American poets, laying aside free verse for a moment, had said, "We can be as formal as you like, when we want." (As a matter of fact, a good many of them can't—but never mind!)

Again, I am surprised by the terrible cohort of poets who can follow a fine first verse with a futile second, and that even more numerous multitude, who, like club-swingers or long-distance cyclists, think that when they have eight or ten lines they may as well go on and make a sonnet of it.

Can it be—let the cloven hoof of English conservatism show itself for once—can it be that the poetry classes are to blame?

VI. A CATECHISM

At this point it might be amusing to consider the criticisms addressed to last year's volume. I will accordingly put myself in the box and attempt to answer my various questioners.

Q. Sir, I like your volume as a whole, but wish to quarrel violently with certain of your choices.

A. Thank you, sir. I am glad you like the

volume as a whole, and very glad that what exception you take is taken violently. A poem must have positive qualities to be the subject of a quarrel. Anything alive must either please or annoy: personally, I prefer it to enrapture or infuriate.

Q. I notice, sir, that in your book the representation of magazines is very inadequate and poor. Most of your selections are taken from the big weeklies and monthlies. Now it is a well-known fact that in America these do not contain the best, the most vital work. It is in the little struggling poetry magazines that the true spirit of American poetry finds its home. We, in the pages of the ————, endeavor to foster, etc., etc.

A. Madam, I must respectfully disagree with you. The somewhat extensive researches I am compelled to make do not at all support your statement. (Incidentally, the fact that a magazine is not represented does not mean that I have not read it.) If we consider the standard of verse printed throughout the year, *The New Republic* comes very easily first. The anthologist, were he pressed for time, might include its entire verse contents and be sure that there would be nothing bad to arraign his taste.

The next in order of merit is certainly a poetry magazine, but it is neither obscure nor struggling. I mean Miss Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*, which prints very much admirable verse, but is more indulgent than the *New Republic*.

I don't for a moment say that many of the smaller poetry magazines are not excellent, and indispensable to the student of modern verse; but the big poets are to be found in the big magazines. They often begin in the little magazines,

and go on contributing to them, but they are not long in finding their way into the big ones.

I read every poetry magazine I can get hold of, and am sincerely grateful to the many editors who send me copies. But I cannot subscribe to any praise of them which involves disparagement of their greater brethren.

Q. A serious omission from the poets included in your anthology was Miss ———, one of America's most flutelike lyrists, whose reputation is immense and growing rapidly.

A. Had I included any of Miss ———'s verses which I read during the period under review, Madam, the growth of her immense reputation might possibly have been retarded.

Q. Are you a Feminist, sir, that you accord the hospitality of your collection to so many of our weaker sisters? I fear your chivalry gets the better of your taste.

A. You astound me, sir. I thought America was a woman's country. At the same time, I am not a Feminist. If I had sexual prejudices in literature, they inclined in the opposite direction. Having been educated at an English public school, I would not read a book written by a woman if I could help it. Now that advancing years have mellowed my point of view, I have no bias toward or against the woman poet. I just read all the poems I see.

Also, poets' signatures are not always a sufficient guide as to gender.

Q. Sir! ——— and her iridescent babies! Good Lord!

A. The form of your criticism, sir, leaves me in some doubt as to your grievance. I take it that you dislike the adjective employed, or do

not regard maternity as a fit subject for poetic treatment. I admit, of course, that such subjects tend to beg the poetic question, depending utterly upon the manner in which they are handled, and that many hundreds of poems written by American ladies in celebration of maternal joys possess distinctly emetic qualities. In fact, any poem about babies or "Son of my flesh" starts, as far as I am concerned, under a strong handicap. Thus those that are included have in my opinion enough personal enthusiasm and workmanship to carry them through.

As for "iridescent" — I don't know what an iridescent baby is, but possibly the adjective is the twentieth century equivalent of "clouds of glory."

Q. I suppose you have made no worse fist of it than most people would have. It follows that 1923 was a poor year. There is nothing in your book that provokes the immediate response and thrill inseparable from true poetry.

A. I am touched, sir, by your faith in my judgment, especially when you have so little to support it. The way in which you divert the blame from me to the year 1923 is courteous in the extreme. This kindness and the awe with which my publishers send me your review make it difficult for me to dispute your other remark, as I must, and vehemently.

I maintain that there are several poems in last year's book which would do credit to any year. If you cannot respond to Mr. Robert Frost's lyric, to Mr. Graves' poem about the meeting of East and West, to Mr. Thomas Hardy's nor to Mr. Wallace Stevens': if none of these widely different but admirable poems can move you — well, sir,

I can confidently leave the issue between us to our readers.

Q. Sir, your anthology, a veritable constellation of golden things, leaps to the eye with the authentic gait and gesture of true poetry.

A. I am so glad, sir.

Q. Sir, I am surprised that a person of your apparent good taste should have included such trivial and almost blasphemous balderdash as

A. One moment, sir. You compliment me upon my taste, and immediately point out how your own differs from it, Pardon me, sir, but I would not wish you to start the argument at a disadvantage.

Q. Sir, this schoolboy impertinence is neither here nor there. I repeat that the piece of rubbish I mention is a blot upon your book. I hope you will include nothing of the kind in future.

A. I fear, sir, that I can make no promises.

Q. Sir, from your reading, which would you say is the best of the smaller poetry magazines, and who is the most promising of our younger poets?

A. In answer to your first question, sir, the editors of such journals very kindly supply me with copies gratis, and so it would ill become me to particularize. Each has its own peculiar excellence. Your second question seems even more dangerous.

Q. At least tell me one or two poetry magazines well worth watching.

A. The *Fugitive*, the *Wanderer* and *Palms*.

Q. And a poet?

A. Miss Roberta Teale Swartz, who, if she goes her own gait and treats other people's opin-

ions of her work with due indifference, should become a fine poet.

Q. Sir, as representing the Department of Modern Literature at —— College, ——, ——, I beg to protest against the inclusion of certain poems (listed below) in your anthology. We endeavor, sir, to put before our pupils the latest works in all branches of modern literature, and it is in the highest degree essential that such compilations as yours should contain nothing that might give offense. I appeal to you with confidence to coöperate with us in the future as regards this important matter.

A. Sir, I wrote a very full reply to your letter, but upon certain representations made to me I have withdrawn it. I have, however, communicated with you through the medium of a personal letter, under such forms of courtesy as befit members of the same profession, however alien their beliefs and different their ambitions.

Q. Sir, why do you include satire and other light verse?

A. Because I endeavor to represent in THE BEST POEMS all kinds of verse but the facetious. It is for this reason that I have included in this number Mr. Leonard Bacon's verses, as an example of their kind — not from any peculiar sympathy with the views they express. A little levity does the book good. The folk of the Middle Ages took their religion seriously, but that did not prevent them from introducing comic interludes into their religious plays and showing a pretty taste in gargoyles. It is our fault if we have lost the art of laughing in church. Let us, at any rate, take poetry seriously without being solemn over it.

Q. Sir, your book contains so little of the

year's output. Why do you not list more poems on the asterisk and honorable mention system?

A. If I do not like a poem well enough to wish to include it, sir, my opinion of it is of no further consequence to anyone. The asterisk system applied to poetry would be an impertinence.

And so, having answered all questions to the best of my ability, I stand down.

VII. SOME INTERESTING BUT NOT CONCORDANT JUDGMENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF POETRY WITH OCCASIONAL MISGIVINGS IN BRACKETS

Poeta nascitur non fit.

(The motto of the poetry classes?)

"Can the writing of poetry be taught?"

Yes, to poets.

A poem is what a good poet very occasionally writes by the grace of God.

(Alas, our poor title!)

"Any help given to a young poet with his work is the worst hindrance he will have to overcome."

"Poetry — the best words in the best order."

(I wish I were a logician.)

"Poetry — the rhythmical creation of beauty."

(That's a nasty one — from an American, too.)

"Emotion recollected in tranquillity."

(A state of mind to which modern life does not very readily lend itself.)

"The only authoritative criticism of an art comes from a practitioner of that art."

"Personally, I should never trust a poet to edit an anthology."

"Culture lies not in acquiring opinions but in shedding them."

(Then let us be truly cultured, and shed all these opinions — except this one.)

(NOTE: These are all genuine opinions, and I set them down at first with their author's names against them: but I have removed the names in case I should appear to be making fun of anybody.)

VIII. CONCLUSION

There is nothing more to say, nor indeed any valid reason for saying so much, unless it be that one is apt to chatter over subjects that interest one. I hope to continue the book for a year or so yet, and trust that it will find a useful place among its kind.

I am very grateful for a deal of helpful criticism, notably to Mr. Conrad Aiken, to Mr. John Gould Fletcher, and to Mr. Louis Untermeyer. I thank very cordially the many poets and editors who have helped me by sending files and clippings. This year, in order that I might see proofs, the manuscript has been made up a month earlier, with the result that some bundles of clippings arrived too late. I apologize to the senders for an inconvenience which will not occur again.

The year for the next volume will be reckoned from June 1, 1924, to May 31, 1925. May I once again beg poets and editors who would like to be represented to send me clippings of poems with magazine and date of issue, and files of periodicals, in good time before the date for making up the book? I read every magazine the publishers and I can lay hands on, but there are bound to be some that I miss: and the best way of making sure that I see a poem is to send it to me.

L. A. G. STRONG.

Summer Fields, Oxford, England.

THE BEST POEMS OF 1924

A DREAM OF DEFEATED BEAUTY

ALL day they played in gardens hid amid golden
towers
That made the blue burn deeper above their
world of flowers.
Within their flaring gardens the pools drank in
the sky
And the light shining figures that flamed or
fluttered by.
There lute or harp string sounded from noon to
eventide,
And every voice that murmured a mirror was
to pride.
All day on play and music the young queen
feasted deep:
Her happy heart foretelling of night and love
and sleep,
When he unto whose glory the earth made
sacrifice
Would give all to make richer the dark of lovely
eyes.
Within her palace chamber the purple slumbrous
shade
At midnight slowly lightened where the young
queen was laid;
And moonlight marbled over flower foam and
jewel sheen,
And carved in pearl and mystery the white limbs
of the queen.
The young queen smiled in slumber as if in dream
she knew
What dragons chained lay sleeping; what horns
for battle blew;
And who would bow the genii from thrones of
blinding fire

To send their airy children to dance at her desire.
The young queen paled in slumber as if she there
 had known
Some majesty unbending on some unconquered
 throne.
Where had she soared in slumber? And who was
 this who came
Making the dusk all starry with plumes of magic
 flame?
Who mourned in lofty sorrow above the body's
 pride,
"This Babylon that I have built" and bowed its
 head and sighed.

A. E.

IRELAND

1924

THIS is your dream of yesterday,
The equilibrium of the storm.
No, there was nothing cast away:
The fiery cloud has taken form.
You do not know yourself in this,
But did you know your being true,
And what was smoke from the abyss,
And what celestial fire in you?
Whatever things you loved were won,
What was not loved is still denied.
That Law whose writs forever run
Will make no sacrifice to pride.
The powers that cause the earth to quake
Seem to run riderless and free
Through nature, yet they never break
The music of her chemistry.
If to be vanquished is your part
And all the fortunate stars withdraw,
Through the red chaos of the heart
Still breathes the music of the Law.
It gives to you what is your own.
If still you be of slavish mind
You ne'er shall sit upon a throne
And sway a sceptre unconfined.
And if you be the slave of hate
Within yourself you fall and fall
Until the heart be desolate,
And love is dead beyond recall.
A nation is whate'er it loves.
If love be dead it too must die.
Go, give an offering of doves
To win its immortality.

A. E.

THE VAMPIRE

1914

SHE rose among us where we lay.
She wept, we put our work away.
She chilled our laughter, stilled our play;
And spread a silence there.
And darkness shot across the sky,
And once, and twice, we heard her cry;
And saw her lift white hands on high
And toss her troubled hair.

What shape was this who came to us,
With basilisk eyes so ominous,
With mouth so sweet, so poisonous,
And tortured hands so pale?
We saw her wavering to and fro,
Through dark and wind we saw her go;
Yet what her name was did not know;
And felt our spirits fail.

We tried to turn away; but still
Above us heard her sorrow thrill;
And those who slept, they dreamed of ill
And dreadful things:
Of skies grown red with rending flames
And shuddering hills that cracked their frames;
Of twilights foul with wings;

And skeletons dancing to a tune;
And cries of children stifled soon;
And over all a blood-red moon
A dull and nightmare size.
They woke, and sought to go their ways,
Yet everywhere they met her gaze.
Her fixed and burning eyes.

Who are you now, — we cried to her —
Spirit so strange, so sinister?
We felt dead winds above us stir;
And in the darkness heard
A voice fall, singing, cloying sweet,
Heavily dropping, through that heat,
Heavy as honeyed pulses beat,
Slow word by anguished word.

And through the night strange music went
With voice and cry so darkly blent
We could not fathom what they meant;
Save only that they seemed
To thin the blood along our veins,
Foretelling vile, delirious pains,
And clouds divulging blood-red rains
Upon a hill undreamed.

And this we heard: "Who dies for me,
He shall possess me secretly,
My terrible beauty he shall see,
And slake my body's flame.
But who denies me cursed shall be,
And slain, and buried loathesomely,
And slimed upon with shame."

And darkness fell. And like a sea
Of stumbling deaths we followed, we
Who dared not stay behind.
There all night long beneath a cloud
We rose and fell, we struck and bowed,
We were the ploughman and the ploughed,
Our eyes were red and blind.

And some, they said, had touched her side,
Before she fled us there;

And some had taken her to bride;
And some lain down for her and died;
And some, to whom she was denied,
Who had not touched her hair,
Ran to and fro and cursed and cried
And sought her everywhere.

"Her eyes have feasted on the dead,
And small and shapely is her head,
And dark and small her mouth," they said,
"And beautiful to kiss;
Her mouth is sinister and red
As blood in moonlight is."

Then poets forgot their jewelled words
And cut the sky with glittering swords;
And innocent souls turned carrion birds
To perch upon the dead.
Sweet daisy fields were drenched with death,
The air became a charnel breath,
Pale stones were splashed with red.

Green leaves were dappled bright with blood
And fruit trees murdered in the bud;
And when at length the dawn
Came green as twilight from the east,
And all that heaving horror ceased,
Silent was every bird and beast,
And that dark voice was gone.

No word there was, no song, no bell,
No furious tongue that dream'd to tell;
Only the dead, who rose and fell
Above the wounded men;
And whisperings and wails of pain
Blown slowly from the wounded grain,

Blown slowly from the smoking plain;
And silence fallen again.

Until at dusk, from God knows where,
Beneath dark birds that filled the air,
Like one who did not hear or care,
Under a blood-red cloud,
An aged ploughman came alone
And drove his share through flesh and bone,
And turned them under to mould and stone;
All night long he ploughed.

CONRAD AIKEN.

TO CYNTHIA

SUFFER my too ambitious hand
To range these low, delicious hills,
Invest me freedman of a land
Exile from which dejects and kills;
With pious lips let me revere
The sacred roses cherished there.

I'll gather no more garlands now —
Mere bubbles of imperfect light —
Since in that secret country grow
Petals so delicate and bright.
And when for love of flowers I pine
My senses shall exult o'er thine.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

INTERVAL

WATER pulls nervously whispering satin across
cool roots, cold stones;

And a bird balances his soul on a song flash, a
desperate outcry:

These are the minor chords, the monotones;

This the undefeated gesture against an armored
sky.

The moment is metal; the sun crawling over it
is a fly

Head-down on a bronze ceiling; the hot stillness
drones:

And you go sliding through green sea shafts, and I

Am an old mountain warming his tired bones.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

MARKED

BELIEVE me, there is enough strength left in those
Dead syllables we buried so frantically
A year ago to make the thought of a rose
Or a river with lights press like an agony,
Go like a spear through my blood, come on me
Like a weight of frozen fire! — And yet we suppose
We can shut our teeth and forget! — And that
 bravery
Glitters an instant and then as instantly goes.

For he whom love has troubled can never quite
Lock out the proud insistence of the sound
Her feet give: something vigilantly white
Has marked his way and shadowed him and bound
His forehead with a cord of terrible light,
His throat with strings that cannot be unwound.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

THE MIRRORS OF GRUB STREET

By a Janitor with a Vacuum Cleaner

I

OH, Sinclair Lewis! eighteen years ago,
When first I knew you (you were good to know),
My childish mind was helpless to foresee
What would become of you, and what of me.
Then you were thrilling as a summer's day,
Quite mad, of course, poor dear, but always gay,
Light on your intellectual feet, and kind
To my small virtues, to my vices blind.
And still you have not altered in my sight
For all of the abysmal books you write.
I can forget your mess of social pottage,
Babbitt's base metal, love in a Kennecottage,
Ideas wide of fact as Heaven from Hell,
Books that defy the probable — and sell —
Because in all their posture and grimace
Gleams of your native innocence I trace,
And still detect, in the satiric pose
And poetry dwindled to bastard prose,
Some faint suggestion of the old bright touch
Of days before you thought you thought so much.

But now you're serious, have a mission, too,
And cut your cloth just as real authors do,
And spend much time, or so it seems to me,
Fitting mankind into your formulæ
Forgetful that mankind, he, she, or it,
Is quaintly made, and indisposed to fit.
"This — this is Main Street," bravely you pro-
claim,
And the press rolls the ball — What's in a name!
And the loud critic slavers on uncurbed,
While the Fords roll down Main Street unper-
turbed.

When a new model motor car is made
You know the dealer's splendor and parade.
You know his patter, without stay or stop,
Of Timken bearings and of one-man top,
Full-jewelled differential, wheels of gold.
That sells the job. Just so was "Main Street"
sold.

And "Main Street" disappeared from mortal view
With the scrapped cars of 1922.

And Time's corroding hand begins to tarnish
The gloss of "Babbitt's" iridescent varnish,
Though Stuart Sherman, with a verve immense,
Stands like the motor agent in defence.

Oh, Red! delicious friend of the good years,
Why will you play with H. G. Wells' ideas?
The fact is he and you are of a sort
In this alone: Description is your forte.

And you are children when you reason. Hence
You think that you are strong on inference,
Which you may gather from my serpent song
Is something on which Man is seldom strong.
Balzac would not have tried to understand
The riddle of Main Street running through the
land.

And men are tested out from day to day
By the manner of the tasks which they essay.
To comprehend one man, his reach and height
Is the uttermost aim of them who greatly write.
But you and Wells (I put your name before
Maliciously) must needs do something more
Than paint your man, and so, I must confess,
Have both achieved incomparably less.

Oh, drop the sociological. Forget
High ideation. That dragon-womb may spet
Her thickest gloom in academic bowers.
But those abodes of dullness are not ours.

Advice is deadly — be advised by me.
Henceforward be not dull disguisedly.

For you to me were spirit and romance.
And — oh, my God! a light to ignorance.
Be it again. Take a man's pen and write.
I now and then note the defect of light.
Write anything! Write poetry! Write thrillers!
And I'll address no list of caterpillars
Henceforth to you, but leave you to pursue
Your blameless path. This with my love. Adieu.

II

Who fished this murex, the Tyrian dye,
Staining the sea of modern poetry
A fainting purple of uncertain hue?
Who was the fisherman? I can't say who,
But I am entertained beyond my wish
By the spectacle of an uncommon fish.
I read "The Waste Lands," reader, every word.
What was not moonshine was at least absurd,
Beauty of phrasing smothering in a haze
All meaning. Is it that his mind decays?
Or must we take it rather that behind
The clangorous phrase there never was a mind?
But let him learn from my impartial rhyme
That work is for an age, not for all time,
And Sir James Fraser'd sue a man for libel
Who quoted him as if he were a Bible.
The piled quotations glint on Eliot's page,
The far-fetched treasure of another age,
Like pearls with beads of rhinestone set between,
No whit the better for their change of scene.
Eliot, for fairer things they make me yearn,
Would you be learned, then for God's sake learn
That all your gilt and tinsel overwrought

Perishes of its failure to be thought.
And yet I dreamed I heard a lyric cry.
'T was but the echo of the great. Good-by!

III

Oh, Hergesheimer! Wherefore art thou, Joe?
To read that riddle Fate is all too slow.
You're of those enigmatic who have art
And genius, yet have scoffed the better part.
And, with your own consent, yourself condemn
To play henceforward for the T. B. M.
And I for one am never much inclined
To eulogize a leg show for the mind.
Time dries the brain in the close-sutured skull.
And even you grow vulgar and grow dull.
I hate to see you in this blank array.
Oh, what a genius you had yesterday!
Genius — oh, Christ! That any man should
choose,
Having it, to let it die of mere disuse.
But you're a novelist and I'm a rhymer.
The Lord have mercy on us, Hergesheimer.

IV

Sing low, sweet Harriet, nursemaid to the bards
Of slaughter-houses and of cattle-yards,
Who nourished Sandburg till his infant lyre
Set the Chicago River all on fire,
Inflaming nymphs who rule that turbid flood.
Here's your protagonist of guts and blood,
Hog butcher to the universe. Renown
Trumpets his glory — not in Packingtown.
Nay, but where Greenwich Village bobs its hair,
And there is revolution in the air,

Crushed-raspberry Bolsheviks in vain essay
To love a muse in hopeless negligée,
A shapeless, inarticulate, pulpy thing,
With here a rag and there a corset string,
Everything at loose ends with shred and wisp,
And to cap all a hare-lip and a lisp.

Tragic adventure once to me occurred.
It was a summer evening and I heard
Barbaric yawps that echoed from the "Loop."
"Is that a locomotive with the croup?"
Artless, I asked. A lady said to me:
"Young man, it's clear you don't like poetry."
Thus far her observation may be true.
If that be poetry, no more I do.

This much for my soul's good, let me make
plain:

Song never is the spilt milk of the brain,
A slopping first impression taking shape
As circumstance dictates. You cannot rape
The muse or take her Helicon by storm.
There must be rhythm, elegance and form.
She must be won by labor hard and long,
And to stern vigil oft denies the song,
And yet, my Sandburg, wherefore should I rail?
You are but doomed like better bards to fail.

V

Have I cleaned the vacuum? Too well I know
Chimæra bombinans in vacuo
Dies for no verse, however coruscating,
But merrily continues bombinating.
But this thought cheers my spirit, I allow,
It makes no sort of difference anyhow.
And a portentous quiet comforts me.
Peace to the ashes of inanity.

Oh, great Victorians, living and not dead.
They say you lack the punch, you are not read.
They say, they say. What say they? Let them
say.

Tomorrow will be yours like yesterday.
I would swap all our whining and our clowning
For half an hour of Tennyson and Browning.
Chiefs of the tribe that swing the mighty line
With long resounding march and energy divine.
Let dolts blaspheme the great full-pulsing strain
That charms the ear, while beauty storms the
brain

And play with garbage, cockle-shells, and sherds
Mindless of all the majesty of words,
Little desiring, nothing caring, knowing
Naught of the horns of Elf Land faintly blowing.

The great passed nobly on from life to fame.
And after them in troops the half-gods came.
This large remark to Emerson we owe,
That real gods arrive when half-gods go.
Which shows that Emerson, like Homer, nods.
After the half-gods came the quarter-gods.
We wept to see the wheat replaced by chaff,
Worse is behind at which we strive to laugh,
With such a futile and a mortal rigor
As a skull might if naked bone could snigger.
For in another decade, so they say,
All will be authors. So hastes on decay.
In vain we flee for peace to holes and nooks.
For all our enemies have written books.

Then will the glory of Grub Street come to pass,
When every man writes himself down an ass,
Once perquisite of those ill-favored few,
Who could not find an easier thing to do.
Then will plunge down the horror and the night,
When those who read are dull as those who write.

Then, as the presses thunder, while the moan
Of the typewriter gives the overtone,
Shall blind Oblivion, scattering her poppies
From her pale throne of presentation copies,
Shout *finis* to our works both large and small,
And universal darkness cover all.

LEONARD BACON.

SHIPS

I

HIGH Spanish galleons, carven, silken-sailed,
Manned by high adventurers, sailing from Cadiz,
Seeking Eldorado;
Long Moroccan galleys, rowed by dark Ethiopians,
Hiding along the rocky coast of Lesbos,
Lying in wait for the Venetian merchantmen;
And little boats, like butterflies on some Italian
lake.

II

These are all gone, the high adventurous days are
gone,
The Spanish galleon and the gallant Don.
The seas are charted, Eldorado mapped.
Venice is but a tale: and the dark sea has trapped
The Arab pirate and his swarthy slave
Into one grave.
The ferryboats are dreams, smoke in the air.
The steamship conquers everywhere.

III

Envoi

Prince, turn your eyes to the blue sky, for there
you see
High-pooped Spanish galleons, silken-sailed,
Dark Moroccan galleys,
And ferryboats, like butterflies on some Italian
lake.

MARGARET BARRINGTON.

THE PHILOSOPHER

WHEREAS this world thro' time and space
Hath featly been disposed to run
From some place to some other place
By blink of star and blaze of sun,

And since we know not, nor can know,
Wherefrom we come, whereto we go,
Nor with our loudest cries retard
The engine-driver or the guard,

How wise who wrote upon the door
Ne pas se pencher au dehors!

H. H. BASHFORD.

IN THE TRAIN

SUDDENLY from a wayside station
In she comes,— a little satchelled
Country schoolgirl,
Jocund as a field of cowslips.

Looking hard, I think “How goodly
Must have been the stock that bore her
Down the distant
Georgian days and Jacobean,

What a line of comely maidens,
Bending to avoid the tangled
Honeysuckle,
Flitted from their fathers’ homestead,

Happy-eyed, to wander courting
Through the sunset lighted meadows:
What upstanding
Sons and sires have wooed and won them

When she ripens, who shall have her?
Will he know, I wonder? Will he
Know that, loving
Her, he loves the heart of England?”

CLIFFORD BAX.

TROPIC DAWN

HERE, dawn comes up
Over the rim of the sea,
Moving across the silver blue waters,
Dim as a dream,
And as silently.

Always then, I think
Of the shining Christ,
Eloquent with majesty,
Moving over the spell-bound waves
Of Galilee.

HERSCHELL BEK.

CAROL: NEW STYLE

*Dedicated to Certain Worthy Theological
Controversialists*

*If Jesus Christ should come again
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
To study the hearts of righteous men,
On Christmas Day in the morning?*

The first one said, as he passed by,
As he passed by, as he passed by:
"I see three thieves a-hanging high,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

The second one said: "What sinful men!
What sinful men, what sinful men!
Hanging is too good for them,
On Christmas Day in the morning!"

The third one said: "Oh stay your word,
Stay your word, oh stay your word.
Do you not see that one's the Lord,
This Christmas Day in the morning?"

"I know Him by His weary head,
His weary head, His weary head."
Whereat they all fell sore adread,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

"How sad this is we all avow,
Yes, indeed, we all avow!
But what shall we do about it now,
This Christmas Day in the morning?"

Primus:

"I'll run away as fast as I may,
As fast as I may, as fast as I may,

And pretend I haven't been out all day,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

Secundus:

"I'll buy Him a shroud that's spick and span,
Spick and span, spick and span,
For I was always a generous man,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

Tertius:

"But what if we should cut Him down,
Cut Him down, cut Him down?"

Primus et Secundus.

"You fool, do you want to arouse the town,
On Christmas Day in the morning?"

"My speech was rash," the third one said,
The third one said, the third one said.
"We're surer of God when we know He's dead
On any day in the morning."

They knelt in the snow and prayed and bowed,
Prayed and bowed, prayed and bowed.
And the two dead thieves laughed out aloud
On Christmas Day in the morning.

*As Jesus Christ was hanging high,
Hanging high, hanging high,
He saw three Christians passing by,
On Christmas Day in the morning.*

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET.

A YEOMAN

THIS man that at the wheatstack side,
Sits drinking of the twilight air,
This man's my friend, in him's supplied
My refuge from the traps of care.

His life now past meridian mark
One can but say is blossoming yet,
His summer day smiles back the dark,
His sun seems nearer rise than set.

In lusty youth, when surging blood
With foam and din bemuses most,
Leander-like he rode the flood
And strongly came to manhood's coast.

Since, with a sturdy steady tread
He sowed and stored himself good grain,
And glowing yet he bows his head
With plough and scythe across the plain.

And like the north star stablished true
He cheers and guides my asking eye,
To see him at his door anew
Is like a sign shown in the sky.

With all his calm he's eager still,
New dreams in his old vision thrive,
He seizes chance on dale and hill
And all his life has been alive.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

RHYMED CONVERSATION WITH MONEY

How many planets have you raped,
Where only animals escaped
To scrape, with melancholy needs,
The bones of last men lost in weeds?
(Since you are blunt and fraudulent
You must receive a bare treatment.
Adverbs and adjectives undress
When greeted by excrescences.)
You are the stench on any street,
Thick with the vagaries of defeat:
The wench who plys her squawking crime
Within the alleyways of time.
For men desire to guard with pain
The limitations of their brain,
And drag the numbness of their hearts
Within ornate and creaking carts.
And for these tasks they must be bold,
Clutching endurance from a cold
Squirming with you within the dark,
And rising, blistered with your mark.
Again you give to doubting lust
An argument which it can trust:
Imagination spoils the scene
And needs a dagger, crude and mean.
For you were made by men to choke
A lyric with an obscene joke
And strike the mind when it is strong,
With whips methodical and long.
Men who are inarticulate
Desire to parody their fate
With clinking gibberish of coins.
When life, excited thief, purloins
The voice and energy of men,
They lead him to a moldy pen:

They seek revenge, and watch him wilt,
Finding importance in his guilt.
They do not know that they have made
The thief, to revel in his aid,
And you are there to strain your cheek
Against imaginations weak —
Coquettish counterfeit of strength.
I have observed your metal length
Of hands drop on the poet's throat,
And yet he scarcely saw you gloat.
To certain men you merely feed
The stoics of creative need.

Money

I am the vicious test with which
Men find that they are poor or rich.
Without my challenge men might fail
To leave the blurred and murderous jail.
Utopias are merely death:
Men need the scorching of my breath.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

TO A BABY

I

THE blue beginning of your eyes
Condenses the sprawling and assured
Blue with which the sky retreats
From those confessions known as days.

II

Again, your battling mites of blue
Try to stop the revolving monster of life
And find the indelible persuasiveness
Of single forms with the circling blur.
Sundered bits of a soul,
They are not sure that they have still survived,
And plead for the conviction of sight.

III

But when they recollect
The hugely placid manners
Of their life, before the earthly exile
Made them small and fastened
To one pathetic puzzle,
Their blue reverts to swelling reveries
Whose outward circles spurn the curtained jail.

IV

Upon your softly incomplete
Face, where germs of devils stir in curves
That tremble into questioning symmetries,
A thrust of darkness sometimes interferes
With secret, virgin places underneath
Your eyes, and where your leaf-thin nostrils pause.
This darkness bends with helpless messages,
Like history admonishing a world
Personified in one composite face.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

CHANSON UN PEU NAIVE

WHAT body can be ploughed,
Sown, and broken yearly?
She would not die, she vowed
But she has nearly.
 Sing, heart, sing;
 Call and carol clearly.

And since she could not die
Care would be a feather,
A film over the eye
Of two that lie together.
 Fly, song, fly,
 Break your little tether.

So from strength concealed
She makes her pretty boast:
Pain is a furrow healed
And she may love you most.
 Cry, song, cry,
 And hear your crying lost.

LOUISE BOGAN.

FLIGHT OF KISSES

SHE kissed me first for courtesy,
But afterwards for love;
No greater joy could come to me,
Nor stranger passion move.

But flight of kisses needs must be
Like autumn leaves that fall,
From love to chilly courtesy,
And so to none at all.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD.

THE IDIOT

EIGHTY years beside Loch Goil,
Hewing timber, turning soil,
Time had done him ease in toil.

Vast seasons rolling grandly by
Had stamped him with Eternity.
Man and mountain stood star-high.

He walked a slow, deliberate pace,
And, like the world that walks in space,
Seemed less a being than a place.

The man was moulded from the hill,
A portion of that moveless Will
That labouring, is forever still.

His mien, his gait, his mindless gaze
Held all the soul of me in haze,
As fox and serpent hold their prey's.

I spoke. Abruptly he began
A murmuring trail of words that ran
In ruin through the heart of Man. —

(Such words the wise dread Spirit spake
In the desert, saying, "Make,
Son of Man, bread for Man's sake.")

— A rhythmic, low, unbroken sound,
Nearly wordless, like profound
Music breaking from the ground.

Nature here herself had not
Coined in the common ore of thought:
She had with rarer metal wrought.

For he spoke not as one weak-
Witted, but not as men speak
Whose wit is bolted under Greek

Concepts. In a waste of mind,
Lesser and greater than the blind
Bat of intellect can find,

Something moved: — the primal hoarse
Voice of Matter that the Norse
Gleemen heard in tarns and tors

And still the Idiot speaks. And still
His dark, wild wings of language thrill
Across my sight against my will.

F. V. BRANFORD.

A WORD TO THE WISE

Is anything to be so eschewed
As the sickly taste of gratitude?
Elderly tears are easily wrung;
Whenever you give, give to the young,
Whose thanks are not in what they say
But in what they take and go their way.
Give regardless, for better or worse,
Give what you want to give, favor or curse,
Hand or heart, body or mind,
Give it and never look behind,
Give it and never look ahead,
Lest you be salty, lest you be dead . . .
Because the grateful, the aging, the old,
Pay you well with a casket of gold;
But the boys and the girls, though they never pay,
Give you, always, one more day.

WITTER BYNNER.

THE ETERNAL HELEN

ONE has a beard and a manly grasp —
But seldom thinks of me at all,
Except at night in the dark.

He looks his horsemen in the eye
And his counsellors of state. For me,
His comforted, sleepy chest.

The other's lips are curved. In the light
He talks of love and turns to me
Morning and noon and evening.

My women are at ease with him
And follow him, he moves so white
And with so quick a smile.
By a single thought, the bearded one
Could darken the other. . . . But lacking the
thought,
This, this, this!

WITTER BYNNER

THE PHILOMATH SPEAKS

Put by your hornbooks, childer dear,
So ye may now behold
The oldest season of the year
Do that which it is told.
And take good pattern after these
Great winds God bade to blow;
Those leaves He ordered off the trees;
Yon skies He told to snow.

Nor does it matter to the wind
Or sky what may befall,
Since they are glad to please and mind
The Master of us all.
So, childer dear, I hope and trust
That same is your desire:
Now think on this — a moment, just —
While I go mend the fire.

FRANCIS CARLIN.

ENCHANTMENTS OF THE MIDDLE AGE

LONDON is beautiful, I know
Its sooty churches chalked with white,
The quiet squares where plane-trees grow
And lamplit street on rainy night.

Beauty of light and fog and dark,
And yet my heart within me turns
To lands in woodcut books I mark,
For missal lands my spirit yearns.

Where everything is flat and bright
With colors definite and clean,
Where roads turn dazzlingly white
Through forests square and neat and green.

Where hunt the lords of seigneuries
Whose curvèd hounds, unleashed to kill,
Awake the columned silences
With baying strangely thin and shrill.

The little cities, twisted, tall,
Stand up on hills more steep than high,
Each red machicolated wall
Seen clear against the clearer sky.

Paved places where the cypresses
Slant shadows through the noonday glare.
And the springing brick-built belfries
Make musical the evening air.

Where ladies walk demure and fair
In head-dresses with steeple crowns,
Severe and stiff and angular,
In diapered and colored gowns.

Thus every day and firm and bright
Shone beauty; by our modern eyes
Seen only in the fitful light
Of insubstantial ecstasies.

DAVID CECIL

MR. BOND

He was so very deep in woodland lore,
So skilled with brain and old, meticulous hands,
We children ran beside him to adore,
And searched with him for hidden fairylands.

He'd imitate the growling of a bear,
A strutting cock, the gait of an old hen;
He knew the stars, the laws of what-grew-where,
The strategy for leaden soldier-men.

And when, next door, he lay with heaving breast
For tortured hours — whose end was sure, they
said —
We stopped the clocks whose chime might break
his rest,
And left our toys, and played at being dead.

ERIC CHILMAN.

THE PURIFICATION

THEY have gone over, the god, the friend, the
lover,
They have gone over.
It is growing grey now;
There comes the end of day now.

They were signs then, the stars were a glory for
men,
They were signs then.
Those lights flare unseen now,
Things paltry and mean now.

They were true pleasure, the friendly trust, the
praise without measure.
They were true pleasure.
Praise is an empty sound now.
Trust treads no firm ground now.

They were music, joy, and truth, the kisses she
gave him in youth.
They were music, joy, and truth.
They are less beautiful now;
They are but dutiful now.

Aye, they have come to an end, the god, the lover,
the friend;
They have come to an end.
The soul is alone now:
Strong, naked, full-grown now.

RICHARD CHURCH.

THE QUESTION

STEPPING ashore, she looked at him, and held
The proffered arm more firmly than need be,
And he stood calm, not flinching, while she spoke.
“Am I afraid?” she said; and the sun-smitten
water

Threw up its pale reflection over her,
Until she seemed to shudder amid flames
Of fire more cold than ice. “Am I afraid?”
Then for the first time since the fever of love
First raged in him, he saw the picture clear,
Saw the first years of wooing, saw her again
As queen of those untroubled days, a wife,
A mother, unquestioning, and yet in soul
Still virginal, still stranger to the deep,
The dark, the terrible — love robed in passion.
Then *he* had come, and time had gathered round
them

Stormily, signs and portents had charged the air,
Deeper the gloom had grown — husband and child
Blind, insentient, not one happy breath
Laboured in the ominous atmosphere that loured
On all the world, for all the world of friends
To prophesy the flash. Those two alone
Went on their way oblivious, and thereby
Barbing the bitterest arrows against the lovers,
Wounding with faith, stabbing with confidence,
Until the maddened couple would have hated,
If hate had not been steeped in fierce remorse
And so dissolved away — only to give
Some quintessential richness to love’s potion,
Which drugged these anguished lovers, filling them
With courtesies, and wistful moods of grief
That made them brood like gods above the pair,
The poor deluded husband and the child,

And pity them with an untold compassion
Half merging into scorn, yet ever falling
Into humility and shame.

“Afraid?”

He walked beside her on the river bank;
And the wide waters rolling to the sea
Took up the fear, and bore it on their bosom,
Frail featherweight, yet not to be submerged.
Then looking at her, he saw her shadowed eyes
Gleaming with showery light, such as in June
Will sometimes sweep across the purple clover,
Breaking between a passing storm, and one
Still billowed on the south. Strangely her face
Showed to his love, that fitful god-possession
Which makes the dearly-cherished more remote,
More unfamiliar than its casual setting.
And dread more deep than wisdom, deeper than
hope,
Clouded the picture of their mutual years.
What had he now to offer her, what new
Tumultuous experience — she whose years
Had known the marriage-bed, and motherhood,
And westerling passion sinking in despair?
“Fear nothing,” he whispered, stooping to her
hair,
And breathing incense there. And she looked up,
Saw fear reflected in the deeps of love,
And dared not speak. Silently they went
Through shadow-pools beneath the elms, and
crossed
Sunsmitten swards; so on through light, through
dark,
Both with the painful burden of the past
Weighed down, yet bearing in their fearful hearts
The same, mysterious, immortal love.

RICHARD CHURCH.

SILVER AND GOLD

HAMMER the gold and silver into steel.
I have a lucky metal that rings clear
Of heel. The coining air knows, and I know,
That harp, thrown high, will turn a golden head
And they that love once never have been loved.
She glittered through me as a star
In water where the evening deepens honey
Within a barren glen. Now that we are
Awake, come with me, golden head, for woods
Thicken again and the first callow light
Flutters around the hedges. We shall hear
The birds begin as sweetly as the chinking
Of few pence in my pocket. When the tides
Of sun are full and salmon come up from
The south, then we shall hurry where the waves
Carry the heavy light into the shore
And see the marrying wings, for, Love, all day
They are more silver than the lifting oar,
But in the evening they are gold again.

AUSTIN CLARKE.

ALL GOATS

ALL goats have a wild-briar grace.
They are as elegant as thorns,
With little bells beneath their chins,
And pointed horns.

So quick are they upon their feet,
So light and gaily do they prance,
Their hoofs seem little castanets
To which they dance.

And as they raise sagacious heads
Disturbed by some crude passer-by
They look upon him with a most
Satiric eye.

ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH.

SAINT JOHN

A wild pleasure for Saint John
In the desert wandering
Under red cliffs pondering
Shaggy-headed facing dawn
Stooping to lost pools to drink
Meditating by their brink
Stripping fruit from desert trees
Stealing honey from the fierce small bees . . .

A wild pleasure for Saint John
Visionary swift and thin
Wrapped about by a goat's skin
(Nothing man had worked or woman
Woven) like a hairy beast
Curled in a beast's cave to rest
Dreaming with a saint's elation
Of the terrible and lonely pathway to salvation . . .

A wild pleasure for Saint John
In a blinding recognition
To have known his Lord and mission
From the desert to have gone
Shrilling great outrageous things
In the angry ears of kings
Till that head from desert sands
A princess hot with dancing carried between her
hands.

ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH.

THE OLD MARE

Grey despair
Was on the old mare,
Grass turned bitter,
Sky a-glare,
And gnats like thoughts,
And thoughts like gnats,
Everywhere.

Her underlip
Hung pendulous wide,
Her ears twitched back,
Her dusty hide
Heaved with her heavy breathing
And her eyes rolled ominously
To one side.

The mule colt lay
In trampled grass,
Slick-tailed, long-eared,
Bespeaking the ass
Carried so long in her body,
Born in travail and sweat —
Alien, alas.

But staggering
To unsteady feet
The mule colt fumbles
An unknown teat
And the old mare relaxes and sighs
Finding any motherhood
Most sweet.

ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH.

ODYSSEUS

(In Memory of Arthur Griffith)

You had the prose of logic and of scorn,
And words to sledge an iron argument,
And yet you could draw down the outland birds
To perch beside the ravens of your thought —
The dreams whereby a people challenges
Its dooms, its bounds. In ungrown days we knew
you,

In ungrown days we heard you, and we heard
Amongst boys' voices and old men's voices
A man's full voice. The hillsides knew you too,
The deep sea knew you, where you'd swim of
mornings,
And we would call you by a kindly name.

And by that name I'd speak to you, and say:
"You were the one who knew
What sacred resistance is in men
That are almost broken; how, from resistance used
A strength is born, a stormy, bright-eyed strength,
Like Homer's Iris, messenger of the gods,
Coming before the ships the enemy
Has flung the fire upon. Our own, our native
strength
You mustered up." But I will never say it,
Walking beside you, or looking on you.
With your strong brow, and chin was like a targe,
And eyes that were so kindly of us all.

And sorrow comes as on that August day,
With our ship cleaving through the seas for home,
And that news coming sparkling through the air,
That you were dead, and that we'd never see you
Looking upon the state that you had builded.

The news that came was like that weight of waters
Poured on our hopes! Our navies yet unbuilt,
Our city left inglorious on its site,
Our fields uncleared, and over
Our ancient house the ancient curse of war!
And could we pray, touching the island-homeland,
Other than this: "Odysseus, you who labored
So long upon the barren outer sea;
Odysseus, Odysseus, you who made
The plan that drove the wasters from the house,
And bent the bow that none could bend but you:
Be with us still:
Your memory be the watcher in our house,
Your memory be the flame upon our hills."

PADRAIC COLUM.

THE APOSTATE

I'LL go, said I, to the woods and hills
In a park of doves I'll make my fires,
And I'll fare like the badger and fox, I said,
And be done with mean desires.

Never a lift of the hand I'll give
Again in the world to bidders and buyers;
I'll live with the snakes in the hedge, I said,
And be done with mean desires.

I'll leave — and I left — my own true love.
O faithful heart that never tires!
I will return, tho' I'll not return
To perish of mean desires.

Farewell, farewell to my kinsmen all,
The worst were thieves and the best were liars,
And the devil must take what he gave, I said,
For I'm done with mean desires.

But the snake, the fox, the badger and I
Are one in blood, like sons and sires,
And as far from home as kingdom come
I follow my mean desires.

A. E. COPPARD.

PELAGEA

It is late, but the carpenter is knocking:
The floors, sweet shaven pine, are laid;
The rafters pinned, the roof's great beam of teak
That will last an age and nourish history
Is hidden, and the straw's tight trusses
Thatched over cedar scantlings:
Mallet and saw and plane, bright nails, sweet
 wood,
For Pelagea's house, fair nook of sleep
Where he and she no balm will ever find.

The village dreams by the unseen idling river;
Night in her grove of stars
Turns, and her soft tears fall;
Thin billows through the thickets glide
Intoning litanies of leaves,
And like a moth the air is wandering.
But still he stays, this carpenter,
Building their fine new house
Though he is old, and full of sweat and spittle,
And coughs like a hoosey ewe.

I do not speak to him nor he to me,
I bear him quiet company, we do not speak.
A cat in the gloom is mewing;
Draughts in the doorway blow,
And the flame at the candlewick pulls
Like a frightened horse at its tether.
The thoughts in my mind wash round him wave
 on wave,
For he is dying and he soon will die —
What is to come delays not.
Pelagea, his wife, will weep for him
Prim tears, dutiful tears,

But there are others she will weep anon
Turning to me.
Whether she turn to me or turn away
Pelagea's tears will fall —
The drops that hang upon the rose
Are frail as trembling love —
For those dark fancies dwell in her
Which silent thought illumines into fears.

But my love loves me though she does not like my
behaviour:

She does not laugh when I laugh at her
Though I do not laugh maliciously;
And when I walk beside her, pleasantly thinking,
Pelagea's heart is full of those dark fancies —
Fears of love, and love of what she fears.
But what is to come comes ever;
Indolently the moon
Rises, but must rise;
The moon invites the earth, the earth the sun,
Tides must flow, and the great sea must sing.

The cat mews in the darkness, mews and mews.
At the lane's end,
Above their old house with its one red blind
Where Pelagea blows a dying fire,
There are stars, living sapphires, breathing gems.
The old thatched house is like a hassock —
Time itself has kneeled upon it —
But the cot of doves in the yard
And the two white hives
In moonlight make it beautiful;
Not less by day are these things beautiful,
But their small beauty my love never sees:
One mind has a thousand eyes,
The tail of the peacock sees nothing.

And this is true:
Beauty but seldom waits,
Stays neither here nor there nor anywhere.
But dwells in the teeming past,
Or roves beyond us in the ages hence;
So all our clutching fingers grasp at what is sped,
And what is past dreams on
That we may re-enact it and believe
In what is yet to come.

My love loves me, but she does not like my
behaviour;
And I do not like Pelagea's homely sense,
Her virtues, or her fears,
I laugh at them though I do not laugh maliciously;
But her voice
Falls on my heart like a gliding cataract;
Under her hair's winnow of darkness
Her eyes are living sapphires, breathing gems,
Fair as love winging to sweet love
The golden trembling arrow.

Tonight I sat beside her at the hearth;
The bellows poured the quenched ash into flames,
And Pelagea turned on me
Her unforgetting eyes:
"Love blows upon us like the inspiring air
From out this bag of wind. I am a dust
Breathed into fury,
And you the empty thing that gushes.
Would I had never known you," said my love.

Let not, my soul, our love so meanly range;
Without love there is nothing,
'Tis a bond more powerful than behaviour,
Or vague honour tempting time,

Or those dark fancies that our silent thoughts
illumine;
Indolently the moon
Rises, but must rise,
And tides flow, and the great sea sing.

And still, so late, the carpenter is knocking,
So late, so late,
And the cat in the darkness mews and mews and
mews.

A. E. COPPARD.

THE WHITE CAT

SHE moves in the rose alcove of this bed,
Secure, attentive to no vagrant lover
Whose claw annoys the latch; her senses bred
In warmth of dormant languors now discover,
As every night, a virgin paradise
Of seemly pillows, lucent napery,
Perpetual snow of linens that arise
To be explored, and singular tracery
Of hidden form — but in that moment she
Projects the utmost sapience of her ears
Across the silence, where a moth has cast
Unheeded farandoles of dusty tears
Courting the midnight oil, and wittily
Her paw arrests, and curls to sleep at last.

Or pensively she will unhood an eye,
A fiery bauble settled in the blue
Pernicious rim, that like a polar sky
Is cruelest of all colours; as the true
Too faithful pool that gave Narcissus joy
And death, this clear is her untempered look,
Remote as dawn — nor could a hand destroy
Her astral calm; and when the hand forsook,
Its subtle flitting, coldly would she rise —
Slow as a nun that fastens the first veil
Between her and the world, or diligent priest
That envies his own shadow yet dare not fail
By moribund faithless, shriving them with lies
Or yearn, ancestral sphinx, towards the east?

NANCY CUNARD.

AT ELEUSIS

*What they did,
they did for Dionysius,
for ecstasy's sake:*

now take the basket,
think;
think of the moment you count
most foul in your life;
conjure it,
supplicate,
pray to it;
your face is bleak, you retract,
you dare not remember it:

stop;
it is too late,
the next stands by the altar step,
a child's face yet not innocent,
it will prove adequate, but you,
I could have spelt your peril at the gate,
yet for your mind's sake,
though you could not enter
wait.

*What they did,
they did for Dionysius,
for ecstasy's sake:*

now take the basket —
(ah face in a dream,
did I not know your heart,
I would falter,
for each that fares onward
is my child;

ah can you wonder
that my hands shake,
that my knees unbend,
I am a mortal, set in the goddess' place?)

H. D.

BURNING BUSH

ONE morning in eternity
I thought myself into a tree.
I felt my breast push with the sheen
Of leaves expanding into green;
I felt my arms like living wood
Thrill with resilience as I stood;
I felt the sap within my spine
Rise like the heart-blood of the pine.

*Put off thy shoes (there was no sound)
And root thy feet in holy ground.*

I stripped my body to the breeze,
The naked fellow of all trees;
And stood again with arms outspread,
My self almost untenanted.

Then, with a roar, there rose in me
The flames of a strange ecstasy.
My leaves, my branches unconsumed,
With blossoms terrible I bloomed;
So tense, the whole world was obscured,
While, for a moment, I endured.

Then the fierce heat and brilliance died.
I shuddered, cold. On either side
The sun and moon stared like dead thieves.
My arms seemed naked of their leaves.

S. FOSTER DAMON.

ROGUES

THE nearer unto Nature's heart I moved,
In those sweet days of old, the more I loved:
The nearer to the heart of man I move,
As days and weeks go by, the less I love
Where can I find a true and honest mind?
Men rob me, and my love is still unkind.

You cruel rogues, that come this day to borrow
A sum that's promised but not paid tomorrow;
That take like wasps the fruit that's on its way
Towards my mouth, and never fear my nay —
Go to that girl, and state your happy case,
How you can see more kindness in my face.
Go to her, rogues, and show her all the signs,
Where in my face a foolish angel shines.

W. H. DAVIES.

IN DURANCE

I'LL dig under the earth soured with death
And ask the munching worms if they were sired
By nobler than themselves, who, Troy being fired,
Grew fat on heroes, not on bones and breath.
I'll sound the weedy caverns of the seas
To find the carcass of Leviathan,
And of his leathern heart construct a man
Fit to endure such wintry years as these.
I'll climb the air to bring a vulture down,
Bid him pluck out the young buds' shuttered eyes,
Lest they should see the bloom; and where he flies
The dark will scream to give him bleak renown.
Alive or dead, uneasy I must lie
In this cracked world, that is as base as I.

BABETTE DEUTSCH.

VACUUM

THAT evening — wow! That evening! For three
days

We had been storm-bound in Selina's camp —
Selina Frew, of course, the radical,
Wife of G. Manville Frew, the millionaire.
Selina had asked our gang up for the week-end,
Promising "winter sports"; but we all went
Hoping to dodge the skating and the skeeing
And all the primitive boredom of out-o'-doors,
And — well, we dodged it. Hardly had we reached
Frew's rustic mountain-palace when the snow
Came sifting like dry mica from the North,
And with it came a wind out of the North
To drive and pile a dry white dust of death
In ten-foot drifts. . . . I've never seen a blizzard
That equalled this one for malignancy:
But then, I'm not a traveller in wild paths;
I'm city-broken, therefore, nature-shy;
My natural habitat is called Times Square,
With certain runways down adjacent streets
And burrows into theatres and hotels.
In short, I do the "first nights" and a column
Of smartish chit-chat for *The Planet*. . . .

Well;
There we were, all of us, safe, sound and snug
In all the luxury Selina loves,
And loves above all things to satirize,
And likes to dream she's fighting to abolish.
So we weren't worrying — not much! Our crowd,
If we know one thing better than another,
Knows how to take whatever gifts the gods
Offer, and loaf at ease in Zion. Frew's whiskey
Was far beyond suspicion; Frew's cigarettes

Were such as no Young Turk could criticize;
And as for Frew's cigars —! Shade of Lucullus! —
Did we not dine and dance and dine again,
And play seven sorts of poker, from Red Dog
To Deuces Wild, and laugh ourselves to death,
And flirt in shifting couples, and play tag
From cellarage to garret; or else we'd gossip
Witty hours long of Grub Street and Broadway!
We did. I'll say we did. . . . Meanwhile the wind,
A maniac killer from far wastes of death,
Screamed at us, clawed for us — vainly, and
 heaped up
His dry white dust swept from the corridors
Of desolation, making blank the world.

We mocked at him, our impotent enemy!
Thus for two days we mocked at him . . . and
 then,
His fury not abating, and that smother
Of streaming measureless mica never ceasing,
We mocked no more. Something had changed
 in us,
But imperceptibly: we did not know
When, how or why we had changed.

 On Monday morning,
The storm unstilled, we had no golden cream
To enrich our pungent coffee — just powdered
 milk
From tins, mixed up with water; and the *chef*
Was in despair. Selina, too, looked troubled.
She hadn't stocked her larder for a siege.
No one could pass the roads, though; it might be
A week before such drifts were channelled through.
We weren't in the least danger — save of one
 thing,

A vague and brief discomfort; but we hadn't Bargained for that. It irked us. We grew bored: First with the storm, then with our precious selves.

No dancing now. I found a last year's novel, Hugged a withdrawing corner and feigned to read: But the storm was on my nerves. No longer day Ever, I'll swear, dragged out its infinite hours! Maisie and Jane quarreled that afternoon, And sulked through dinner — and I saw Selina Biting her lips to check a snarl, or tears. So the evening threatened inner storm to match The outer wearying tumult; and if a joke So much as showed its head we wrung its neck. You know the mood, perhaps.

Well, finally
We huddled in a dour group about the fire
And grouched, and giped at life, and soon forgot
Our misery in the fun of cursing God.
You couldn't beat our gang for cynicism
That night; we rang all changes on the Doom
Of Man — we revelled in the Doom of Man!
Poor creatures of a day, ape-generated,
Whose flesh was burning grass on a slight planet —
A slight and transient atom of no account
In Fate's fortuitous Yawn, the Universe.
Thus, having cheered and fortified our souls,
We fell to lengthy and ironic *contes*,
All pessimistic, all illustrative
Of this dull swindle — Life. And, last of all,
Old Jemmy Colton, being sombre-drunk,
Brain-seared with a black fire of prophecy,
Began a mad tale of the End of Things: —

“Look forward, say, two hundred years — what then?

Supposing the world lasts two hundred years;
Though, in some wrecked and arid form, it may
Last billions. Never mind. Two hundred years
From now will find us, I predict, no wiser,
No better — far more happy. . . . I predict
A swift change in the social state of man.
No, no, Selina; not your Revolution —
That's a child's toy to what I see before us!
Well; I see *this*:

Man has outrun his strength —
The accumulated knowledge of mankind
Already crushes him. Science has forged
A vast, accelerating mechanism
That, lacking brains to rule it, thrashes on
Toward unimagined chaos. If you have read
Old Henry Adams, and could stumble after
The forked and subtle lightnings of his mind,
You seize my thought, for it derives from him.
Yet I see further, being inspired tonight,
Or being drunk — or bored — or . . . well, no
matter.

Nevertheless the Veil parts to my glance
And I stare forward, shuddering. And I see
A dull and coddled race of slaves, ruled over
By a small group of Super-scientists:
Earth's last, unbreakable Monopoly,
The Monopoly of Mind, being theirs — theirs
only!

These demi-gods — a handful — rule the world.
As for the populace, it lives as silk-worms
Live on their leaves; for Science has set free
The Energy of the Atom and harnessed it;
And — paid by some two hours daily of routine —
Doles out the luxuries men struggle for
No longer, since all men at last possess them.

A Golden Age of Bland Stupidity:
A billion clods ruled over, cared for, despised
By fifty Minds — the Masters! . . .”

But, just then,
As Jemmy Colton paused and sought his glass,
Jane, once his wife, now Billy Miner's wife,
Said: “Oh, for hell's sake, Jemmy, cut it out!
You'll give us all the horrors. As for me,
I love this rotten, meaningless old world!”
And someone else said, “Sure, of course you do!
We all do!” Whereupon, pat to the words,
Baptiste, the head guide of Selina's camp,
Came in and told us that the snow had ceased,
The wind was falling — and the moon was out.

Lord, how we chattered and laughed and danced
that night!

And when we carried Jemmy up to bed
We made it a mock funeral, all forming
A long procession up the stairs, with candles;
All croaking the one hymn we all remembered —
“*Nearer my God to Thee* —”

LEE WILSON DODD.

MARRIAGE

No wandering any more where the feet stumble
Upon a sudden rise, or sink in deep
Marsh grasses. No uncertain following on
With nothing there to follow — a sure bird,
A fence, a farmhouse. No adventuring now
Where motion that is yet not motion dies.
Circles have lost their magic, and the voice
Comes back upon itself. . . . The road is firm.
It runs, and the dust is not too deep, and the end
Never can heave in sight — though one is there.
It runs in a straight silence, and evening falls
At an expected inn, whose barest room
Cannot be lonely if a hand is reached
To touch another hand, the walls forgotten. . . .
Morning is laughter, and the road resumes. . . .
Adventurous, it never will return.

MARK VAN DOREN.

THE CHOICE

SHARPLY our lips are stung by the frozen tears
Dropped from the ravaged beeches naked of
gold;
Till a frosty sun leaps out as the late mist clears
From the desolate wold.

Better, we say, to greet what storms may come,
And catch the gleam in the heart of a troubled
day,
Before all ecstasies have sunk to dumb
And dreamless clay.

For fadeless are some flowers the snows devour,
And deathless is the light no suns renew,
And sweet the singing swiftness of an hour
When hours are few.

And though our hearts are torn with wordless
cries,
And tattered like last leaves the cold wind blows
Hither and thither, and though speech denies
What the eyes disclose;

And though the years may fly and tears may fall
For golden splendour blackened in the mould,
And buried youth whose fires so strangely call
From eyes grown old;

Yet under naked trees that mourn their pride
Uncloaked against the arrows of the sky,
We hail the gleam that will not be defied,
And cannot die.

We choose one hour full-lived from time's defeat,
Rather than lie, like earth's oblivious snow,
Unwounded and inviolate by the sweet
And sour we know.

We shall find beauty at the death of day,
And blind with tears we shall have clearer eyes,
And as our ardent limbs like leaves decay
We shall be wise.

MARY STELLA EDWARDS.

IN REPUDIATION

MEN are the hopes they follow. While you search
Behind my face for the suspected soul,
I wonder if God should house himself in church
To prove the part grown greater than the whole;
I wonder, too, when eyes are so remote
And smiling lips too wild for portraiture,
How the brief flicker of a priestly coat
Across church doors should make that question
sure.

Nay, I have sought no love with sighs and fears:
My expectation leans against the night
And cranes toward Sirius and his rolling years,
Burning, implacable with lust and light:

Turn from me, follow these; if scorn grow
weak

Time shall devise some farther self to seek.

WILLIAM FOSTER ELLIOT.

ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL, NEW YORK

FAINTLY jarring the windows,
Heavy with the weight of a leaden tide that eats
 away the shores of time,
The traffic of Broadway slides under
This old church, cream-white and gold,
With its tall Corinthian pillars,
Its Roman restraint and grandeur,
Its pulpit to which one climbs, the gilt dove
 brooding above it,
Stiffly embroidered with the secret thought of
 England.

A hundred nations pass it
From dawn to darkness, weaving still their
 madness:
Unwearied of exploring
A life clamped in, set free.
Stiffly ironic in its weary gesture
It plants itself amidst and yet withdraws from
 them:
Alpha and Omega painted on its windows
Are jarred, but do not fall.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

THE GREAT BLASKET

I

THE PASSAGE

THE dark cliff towered up to the stars that
flickered
And seemed no more than lights upon its brow,
And on the slippery quay
Men talked — a rush of Gaelic never-ending.
I stepped down to the boat,
A frail skin rocking on the unquiet water,
And at a touch she trembled
And skimmed out lightly to the moonlit seaway.
I, lying in the stern,
Felt all the tremble of water slipping under,
As wave on wave lifted and let us down.
The water from the oars dropped fiery; burning
With a dull glow great globes
Followed the travelling blades. A voice rose
singing
To the tune of the running water and loud oars.
“I met a maiden in the misty morning,
And she barefooted under rippling tresses.
I asked her was she Helen, was she Deirdre.
She answered: ‘I am none of these but Ireland.
Men have died for me, men have still to die.’ ”
The voice died then and, growing in the darkness,
The shape of the Great Island
Rose up out of the water hugely glooming
And wearing lights like stars upon its brow.

II

SOLITUDE

They could not stack the turf in that wet spring,
And the cold nights were icy in our bones,

And so we burned furze and the rusted bracken.
I climbed the hill alone
And by the old fort gathered in the sun
Red fern and crackling furze;
And, as I worked, a mist came from the sea
And took the world away,
And left me islanded in that high air,
Where the trenched doon broods silent on the hill.
I do not know what shapes were in the mist,
But solitude was made more solitary
By some re-risen memory of the earth
That gathered round my loneliness,
And threatened with the dead my living breath.
I could have cried aloud for a sharp fear,
But the mist thinned and withered, and the sun
At one swift stride came through.
They passed, those shadowy threats,
And the great company of Ireland's hills,
Brendan and Slemish and the lesser brethren,
Stood up in the bright air,
And on the other side the sea,
The illimitable Atlantic, rolled and shone.

III

THE DANCE

On the white wall flickered the spluttering lamp
And lit the shadowy kitchen, the sanded floor,
The girls by the painted dresser, the dripping men
Late from the sea and huddled,
These on the settle, those by the table; the turf
Sent up faint smoke, and faint in the chimney a
light
From the frost-fed stars trembled and died,
Trembled and died and trembled again in the
smoke.

“Rise up now, Shane,” said a voice, and another:
“Kate, stand out on the floor;” the girls to the
men
Cried challenge on challenge; a lilt in the corner
rose
And climbed and wavered and fell, and springing
again
Called to the heavy feet of the men; the girls
wild-eyed,
Their bare feet beating the measure, their loose
hair flying,
Danced to the shuttle of lilted music weaving
Into a measure the light and the heavy foot.

ROBIN FLOWER.

THE WANDERER

If the fine needle-point of sense
That trembles at the touch of beauty, were
Slave to the subtler influence

Of the steeled will, as some fond wise aver,
For you that point should vibrate all day long
And the fine trembling issue into song.

But now how idly wavering to and fro
Through East and West and South it seeks the
North

And, whithersoever those wandering circles go,
Comes but a soft, confused muttering forth,
Not the clean praises of that beauty whence
Falls the wild light across my world of sense.

ROBIN FLOWER.

THE DANCERS

I DREAMED a dream more stable than the gross
Pyramid crushing those slow, desolate sands,
Yet swift as time it sank into the sands
Like a bright snake that slides into his hole
Startled by shaking footsteps yet far off.

It was a dream of hoar and lonely hills
Snow-cloaked, and in their hollows hills of snow,
But in their lowest valleys melting hedges
Above the shaded snows. A garden crept
From a deserted house along the hedge,
Half snow, half a green ruin; but the rose,
The rose already bloomed above the snow,
Already mocked with her young lips the wan
And trembling lips of winter dying slowly
Upwards from foot to head, body to spirit.

The day passed in a flash to night, the rose
Nursed her cold cheek in dreams of whispered
spring,

And slept. Then the deserted house awoke,
Lights danced out through the casement on the
snows,

And shadows danced with echoes; for within
Moved the bright shapes of dancers happy and
proud,

And music danced with them and all was dancing—
Lights, shadows, music, echoes and dancers
together.

Last a new music marshal'd other steps,
Every quick heart was fluttered and leapt, for now
Sword dances and the thrill of shrilling reeds
Admonished them of other thoughts than love.
For mid the dancers stept two new-come figures,
Bright Honour, armed and ruddy, Death,
unarmed,

Serene. And Honour laughed and caught the hand
Shining with steady gems of tranquil Death,
And leaned his head, murmuring a heedless jest,
Nor shivered at the lifting of those lids
From shallow azure eyes. Then Death too smiled
And danced; they danced together while the reeds
Shrilled slower, hushed, and muted; but these
danced

Yet with the silence until darkness drew,
And all within was still, without was snow.

The night lay like a heavier snow of time,
While some of battles dreamed and stratagems,
Of ancient fading splendours some, and some
Masculine dreams of sere and sad delight.
All dreamed and waking wondered which was
dream.

And this that seemed more stable than the gross
Pyramid, stranger than the wrinkled Sphinx,
Sank in the sands like any mortal thing —
A life that burns its little life away,
A candle dying of its shining.

With a Copy of the Foregoing.

*With my quick hand I write this flickering verse
Like sullen woods flickering in crafty light;
With this familiar hand that's scored elm-like
By stealthy-creeping life, by love deep-sunk
And death that characters over all; with this
Fond hand that shakes with the slow, stumbling pulse
Till the pulse fail — like a child stumbling on
Along a rutted road and laughing towards
His father who will catch him when he falls.*

JOHN FREEMAN.

A FOUNTAIN, A BOTTLE, A DONKEY'S EARS, AND SOME BOOKS

OLD Davis owned a solid mica mountain
In Dalton that would some day make his fortune.
There'd been some Boston people out to see it:
And experts said that deep down in the mountain
The mica sheets were big as plate glass windows.
He'd like to take me there and show it to me.

"I'll tell you what you show me. You remember
You said you knew the place where once on
Kinsman

The early Mormons made a settlement
And built a stone baptismal font outdoors —
But Smith or someone called them off the
mountain

To go west to a worse fight with the desert.
Well, take me there."

"Some day I will."

"Today."

"Huh, that old bathtub, what is that to see?
Let's talk about it."

"Let's go see the place."

"To silence you, I'll tell you what I'll do:
I'll find that fountain if it takes all summer
And both of our united strengths to do it."

"You've lost it then?"

"Not so but I can find it.
No doubt it's grown up some to woods around it.

The mountain may have shifted since I saw it
In eighty-five."

"As long ago as that?"

"If I remember rightly it had sprung
A leak and emptied then. And forty years
Can do a good deal to bad masonry.
You won't see any Mormon swimming in it.
But you have said it, and we're off to find it.
Old as I am I'm going to let myself
Be dragged by you all over everywhere —"

"I thought you were a guide."

"I am a guide,
And that's why I can't decently refuse you."

We made a day of it out of the world,
Ascending to descend to reascend.
The old man seriously took his bearings,
And spoke his doubts in every open place.

We came out on a look-off where we faced
A cliff, and on the cliff a Bottle painted,
Or stained by vegetation from above,
A likeness to surprise the thrilly tourist.

"Well if I haven't brought you to the fountain,
At least I've brought you to the famous Bottle."

"I won't accept the substitute. It's empty."

"So's everything."

"I want my fountain."

"I guess you'd find the fountain just as empty.
And anyway this tells me where I am."

"Hadn't you long suspected where you were?"

"You mean miles from that Mormon settlement?
Look here, you treat your guide with due respect
If you don't want to spend the night outdoors.
I vow we must be near the place from where
The two converging slides, the avalanches,
On Marshall look like Donkey's Ears.
We may as well see that and save the day."

"Don't Donkey's Ears suggest we shake our
own?"

"For God's sake, aren't you fond of viewing
nature?"

You don't like nature. All you like is books.
What signify a Donkey's Ears and Bottle,
However natural? Give you your books!
Well then, right here is where I show you books.
Come straight down off this mountain just as fast
As we can fall and keep a-bouncing on our feet.
It's Hell for knees unless done Hell-for-leather."

"Be ready," I thought, "for almost anything."

We struck a road I didn't recognize,
But welcomed for the chance to lave my shoes
In dust once more. We followed this a mile,
Perhaps, to where it ended at a house
I didn't know was there. It was the kind
To bring me to for broad-board paneling.
I never saw so good a house deserted.

"Excuse me if I ask you in a window
That happens to be broken," Davis said.
"The outside doors as yet have held against us.
I want to introduce you to the people
Who used to live here. They were Robinsons.
You must have heard of Clara Robinson,
The poetess who wrote the book of verses
And had it published. It was all about
The posies on her inner window sill,
And the birds on her outer window sill,
And how she tended both, or had them tended:
She was 'shut in' for life. She lived her whole
Life long in bed, and wrote her things in bed.
I'll show you how she had her sills extended
To entertain the birds and hold the flowers.
Our business first's up attic with her books."

We trod uncomfortable on crunching glass
Through a house stripped of everything
Except, it seemed, the poetess's poems.

Books I should say! — if books are what is needed.
A whole edition in a packing case
That overflowing, like a horn of plenty,
Or like the poetess's "heart of love,"
Had spilled them near the window toward the
light
Where driven rain had wet and swollen them.
Enough to stock a village library —
Unfortunately all of one kind, though.

They had been brought home from some publisher,
And taken thus into the family.
Boys and bad hunters had known what to do
With stone and lead to unprotected glass.
Shatter it inward on the unswept floors.

How had the tender verse escaped their outrage?
By being invisible for what it was,
Or else by some remoteness that defied them
To find out what to do to hurt a poem.
Yet oh, the tempting flatness of a book
To send it sailing out the attic window
Till it caught wind, and, opening out its covers,
Tried to improve on sailing like a tile
By flying like a bird (silent in flight,
But all the burden of its body song)
Only to tumble like a stricken bird
And lie in stones and bushes unretrieved.
Books were not thrown irreverently about.
They simply lay where someone now and then,
Having tried one, had dropped it at his feet
And left it lying where it fell rejected.
Here were all those the poetess's life
Had been too short to sell or give away.

"Take one," Old Davis bade me graciously.

"Why not take two or three?"

"Take all you want.
Good looking books like that." He picked one
fresh
In virgin wrapper from deep in the box,
And stroked it with a horny-handed awe.

He read in one and I read in another,
Both either looking for or finding something.

The attic wasps went missing by like bullets.

I was soon satisfied for the time being.

All the way home I kept remembering
The small book in my pocket. It was there.
The poetess had sighed, I knew, in heaven
At having eased her heart of one more copy —
Legitimately. My demand upon her,
Though slight, was a demand. She felt the tug.
In time she would be rid of all her books.

ROBERT FROST.

LODGED

THE rain to the wind said
 “You push and I’ll pelt!”
They so struck the garden bed
 That the flowers actually knelt —
And lay lodged — though not dead.
 I know how the flowers felt.

ROBERT FROST.

THE GIRL WITH BRIGHT HAIR

THE girl with bright hair
sat down at the base of a tree
and looked at her torn sleeve.
She wondered if he would notice it.
She blushed when she thought of her appearance
as she crawled through the fence.
Someone might have been looking.
He might have been looking.
It was her first experiment in indecorum,
and not unpleasant.
It was time he came.
They had met only twice before.
The first time they didn't go far.
The next time they naturally went farther.
She didn't know how far they would go this time,
naturally.
She fanned her flushed face with her handkerchief,
and tried to look unconcerned.

At some distance
an elderly white horse
stood and looked at her.
He had stopped eating when she first appeared.
She wanted to tell him to go on with his eating.
A bird came to watch her,
a bird with a blue coat
and hard, inquisitive eyes.
She wanted to tell it to go away.
She had an idea that birds as a rule
do not sit long on a branch
without saying something.

A ground squirrel glided through the grass
not far from her.

It went a little way and stopped.
It stood up on its hind legs and turned about
eyeing her impudently.
She flung up her hand in sheer nervousness,
and the squirrel ran away.
It was incredibly swift and graceful.
She wondered what sort of life it could live
in that lithe, alert little body.
She didn't know its name.
She knew nothing of animals,
not even dogs and cats.
They kept none at her city home,
only two motor cars.

The girl with bright hair
stretched her comely silk-clad legs
into a more comfortable position
(she had been sitting with one foot under her),
and began kicking with her heels in the soft sod.
It seemed astonishingly pleasant to do this.
She wondered why people didn't do it oftener.
The earth is good, she thought,
just common earth, dry and dusty on top,
wrinkled, pitted, grey (like the cheek of an old
woman
who has had many experiences),
the home of innumerable insects
struggling among the grass blades
or burrowing beneath the surface.
She prodded deeper,
with a stick this time,
making quite a hole,
turning up living organisms
imbedded in the black, moist dirt —
an indecently white grub
curled into a ring,

a bundle of brown angle-worms
lasciviously intertwined,
a beetle that lay on its back
showing a lewd underside
red, sensitive, shrinking.
She felt a queer shame
before the amazing mystery of the soil.
She smoothed the place over quickly,
smiling at her folly.
She felt as though she had been caught at a
keyhole
looking at forbidden things.

Yet here was the source, she argued,
here the bare breast of the mother.
Everything had come from this —
tree, grass, bird, animal,
man, and the consciousness of man,
the girl herself and the bright hair!

She turned from this thought
to the August sunlight with relish.
It beat through the thick foliage over her head,
it pushed the leaves aside to get at her,
it dazzled her eyes pleasantly,
it induced an agreeable suffocation.
Again she thought,
The earth is good,
the earth is alive.
And by some odd miracle
she entered into the life of the grass
and the trees and the countless breathing
organisms
thick all about her —
leaping, flying, crawling, squirming,
humming, singing, droning, chirping, mute,

snout and bill and lip and fang and mandible,
food and pleasure, food and pleasure,
eat and drink and mate and die,
bridals and births and funerals,
the mid-summer pageant
of a fierce and foreign little people.

A thousand images
detached, muddled, glowing,
flowed through her mind.
She felt the fertility of the soil
as she crumbled it in her fingers;
there was something reminiscent,
something profoundly moving
in the mere contact of her skin with the soil.
The sun grew heavy and hot;
it pressed down upon her,
it pulled at her heart strings;
the fecund moment came;
the wild flowers made their magic at her feet
with waving impudent stamens;
two butterflies united swam through the air
in long exquisite spirals;
there was a commotion close to the ground,
a breathing, a pushing, a sucking throughout the
soil.
She began to ache all over;
the earth sent out insatiable small fingers
that gripped her;
she was enveloped in draining magnetisms;
her breathing became quick again;
her clothing oppressed her;
she felt as if she were bursting;
her body seemed to rise and fall with the pulse of
the earth;

she loosened her dress at the throat and the waist;
her eyes closed;
she lay very still;
behind her closed lids the colors came and went,
orange and amethyst,
sapphire and purple,
and cool spaces of darkness
advancing and receding.
And through it all
the piercing sweetness of the aching cells.
Presently her body relaxed,
every cell became quiescent,
she slumbered inert on the ground
her hands clutching at clumps of blue grass,
one knee raised high,
her skirt fallen back
in unseemly fashion.

She was awakened by the brushing of feet
through the grass.
She sat up quickly,
and pulled down her dress.
A young man in faultless summer gear
hastened toward her.
The young man threw away his cigarette
and ran forward.
"Darling," he said, with arms outstretched.

She got up coolly,
a polite smile killing enthusiasm.
"I'm only ten minutes late
at most," he pleaded.

"You are a thousand years late
at least," she answered.
"I am in love with another."

WARREN GILBERT.

LYRIC

Love, you are very sweet.
How sweet I cannot tell.
From flashing hair to slender feet,
Incomparable.

I think one sunny day
When all the gods were glad
They formed you in a new hard way
To make men mad.

Love meant you for his own, perchance,
And then aside his purpose tossed
On sudden, when he saw the glance
Of Psyche's pinions down the coast.

O made for man's delight,
Delicate, stupid, sweet,
From the slim shoulders marvelously white
Down to the slender feet.

WARREN GILBERT.

A SEA SONG

"Now I like the feel of that," said the ship to the
wind and sea,

"Roll me, roll me easy, till I get my feet once
more.

Take a hold along my rigging, and play your
pitchy harp,

Pluck the strings all mournful-like, the way you
did before.

"No, I can't ride a wave so well, weighted down
with cattle,

And they'll blare a throaty song to your harping
in the twine,

But roll me, roll me easy where your slow swells
saunter,

Fling your salty spray till my decks are white
with brine.

"Hang a moon aloft on my sky-sweeping mast
head,

A sea moon softened by a misty, yellow ring.

Easy till I strike my gait — ah, now I'm ready;

Pluck my harp strings, all you winds, and now,
let's sing.

"We'll sing till the moon fades and dawn leads
the day along

Up the world's side to the sea's rim of blue.

O winds of the wide sky and waves of the seven
seas,

A ship may ask no better than to come at last
to you!"

HELEN IVES GILCHRIST.

EPIGRAM

You have a new bed
Claudia
And ask for an epigram

There is no witty epigram
Without a point
Claudia

LOUIS GILMORE.

IMPROVISATION

IF I were a peacock
I would watch you
With a thousand eyes.

If I were a centipede
I would track you
With an hundred feet.

If I were an octopus
I would hold you
With eight arms.

If I were a cat
I would love you
During nine lives.

If I were a god
I would possess you
In three persons.

LOUIS GILMORE.

TO A GOLDFISH

HÉLAS

We may not rightly
Know each other,
O goldfish

Our spheres inhibit!

LOUIS GILMORE.

SUNT APUD INFEROS TOT MILIA
FORMOSARUM

I, as the Wise Ones held of old,
Hold there's an Underworld to this;
And do not fear to be enrolled
In Death's kind metamorphosis.

More wonderful than China's halls
To Polo; more than all the West
That shone through the confining walls
When great Magellan made the quest:

Enlarged and free, the wings of Rhyme
Cannot outreach its purple air;
The generations of all Time
And all the lovely dead are there.

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY.

TO W. B. YEATS, WINNER OF THE
NOBEL PRIZE 1924

(To build a Fountain to Commemorate his Victory)

Now that a town of the North
In which a discerning band
Has caused your name to go forth,
And lifted on high your hand
Before all men on the Earth,
As a sign of a contest won;
What should you do with your wealth
But spill it in water and stone;
With a Dolphin to scatter the spilth,
To be for a sign when you're gone
That you, in the town of your birth
Laboured and hewed at a cup
To hold what the clear sky spills:
Why should you not set it up
Under the granitic hills?
What did the Roman of old
After the Pyrrhic slaughter,
But spend the hard-won gold
To bring in the Sabine water?
Gracious and bountiful men,
Cæsars and Cardinals,
Laid hands on the mountain treasure, and then
Spilt it within the walls,
For children to dabble and splash
And break the bead at the brim;
For sparrows to shudder and wash,
And the Dolphin's freshet unlimn
The Dolphin under the wave
Till he seem to tumble and reel,
For his back to a Poet he gave,
And he follows at Venus' heel:
He comes from the depths at a son

O set him on high in his place,
For he stands for what flows in the lovely and
strong
And a sign of the Julian race!

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY.

AT THE GAMES

(Written January, 1924, in poetic anticipation of the Gallin-Brousse incident: and awarded a medal by the Literary Jury of the Olympic Games.)

Two quiet sportsmen, this an Englishman,
That French, seated one crowded afternoon
In the Paris amphitheatre at the Games
And curiously eyeing each the other
Found voice together "We have met before"
Then clasped hands on the memory.

Fr. Still alive,
Old friend? How did you manage to endure
Those three worst years of War after we met?
Where, tell me! show me that you too remember.
Eng. In a field near Albert.

Fr. The occasion?

Eng. Sport.

Fr. Bravo! the occasion then as now, *le sport!*
A football match between allied battalions,
1915, mid-August. You remember?

Eng. Yes, I recall it well, the famous match —
One goal apiece at half-time, still a draw
When the whistle blew to end it, two goals all.

Fr. "Shall we play overtime to find the victors?"
"No, no, leave it a draw for friendship's sake.

We'll play it out," we cried, "*après la guerre.*"
Eng. That second goal you Frenchmen got was
fine.

Your left-outside, the big man, swerved across,
Beat both the backs and scored with a stinging
volley.

He left our young goalkeeper standing dazed.

Fr. Maurice, his name was.

Eng. Norris was our boy.

Fr. Maurice was killed before Verdun.

Eng. Young Norris

At Passchendaele; I wouldn't dare to reckon
How many of that team still boot the ball.

Fr. Brave fellows, no *embusqués* in that class.

Eng. You played right-back that day.

Fr. You, left-inside.

Your company took over billets from us.

I have kept the slip you gave me for receipt.

Eng. But come, how are you now? *Blessé?*

Fr. *Bien blessé.*

Both lungs, also this leg at La Fille Morte.

Eng. I at Cambrai, the lungs, this shoulder too.

My friend, there was a time in hospital

I used to calculate what chance remained

Of playing any game when I came out.

At first, my best hopes were for bowls and croquet,

Curling perhaps and billiards. I despaired

At first, even of playing village cricket

With a boy to run for me when I went in,

And as for Rugby football or rock climbing,

Those were my sports by preference . . . what?

yours too? . . .

But health flowed back far stronger than I
dreamed.

How much can you do now?

Fr. More than I hoped.

Tennis, indeed, but three sets are too much.

Eng. Ah, three sets are beyond my limit, too.

What brings you here today?

Fr. A younger brother.

Eng. *La Boxe?* My younger brother's boxing too
In the middle weights.

Fr. Then they should meet!

Eng. } The rascals!
Fr. }

Eng. He boxes well?

Fr. I've staked big money on him.

(Laughter from both, but then a doubtful silence.)

Fr. You are thinking, my old comrade?

Eng. Many thoughts.

The personal, the philosophical,
But banded in a close fantastic medley.
We English and you French have different modes
Of thought; you think in logical progression,
We in a coloured flurry of images,
Neither more perfect than the other mode,
For Action springs from both alike.

Fr. Well said!

Voltaire and Shakespeare! yes, it staggers me
That nations bred on genius so diverse
Can ever meet and parley at one board,
Can ever league against a common foe,
Play the same sports, use the same sporting code,
Agree on the same virtue, sportsmanship!

Eng. Agree, you say? do we, can we afford it?

But *à nos moutons!* Logic has demanded
Account of my fantasies.

Yes! these brothers,
What could they think of our new meeting here
After three years of war and six of peace?
How could they understand, though we explained?
They were too young to serve in France like us,
They still have their knight-bachelor blood to cool,
The same young heat of blood we cooled in War.
Victory would be sweet for them; yet note!
Whichever wins, we stand to lose.

Fr. *Vous dites?*

Eng. I mean, here we two sit linked once again
By common pleasures, common sufferings,
The same despairs and reassurances,
Blood-bonded also by the name of Sport.

Fr. Then?

Eng. All at once to end this harmony

A cross wind rises from two younger brothers
Each braced by hopes of the same famous prize,
Each backed to win by an elder brother's purse.
One must be beaten, what of his elder brother?

Fr. He twists a wry smile in the name of Sport,
And shakes a fist with his old comrade here,
Consoled by boastings of good sportsmanship.

Eng. But friendship, is that quite the same again,
Especially if one disputes the verdict?

"*Après la guerre.*" Is this the sequel then,
Our football match decided by *la boxe*?

I never wanted that decision made.

Leave it a draw, because our friends are dead!

Fr. I hope these brothers never meet at all,
I hope both beaten in the earlier bouts,
So we can join in amicable wrath
Against the unknown who bears off the prize.

Silence, again? You are thinking, my old
comrade?

Eng. Yes, lost in thought as in a maze of trenches.
Once more to Logic, then. You have in France
As many, I dare say, as we in England,
Enthusiasts who wish to end all War,
To wipe it from the world with "never again"?

Fr. I have wished the same myself, in hospital
While waiting for my thirteenth operation.

Eng. So too have I, and in the trenches even,
When the barrage rolled forward, wreathed in gas.
But now, I am doubting whether War, as such,
War, even modern War, is man's worst fault.
Is conflict so much uglier seen in War
When patent, more dramatically staged,
Than seen in Commerce, Social life, the Arts,

Disguised in their official mask of Peace?
Listen to a story, and then answer!
When my grandfather, fighting in New Zealand,
Was captured with his company of foot,
Surprised at dawn by a bold Maori tribe,
Disarmed and ignominiously trussed up,
Those Maoris handed them their bayonets back
On this condition, they should fight it out,
Cold steel against cold steel, with equal sides,
In a pitched battle on the open plain.
Fr. Those were the sportsmen!

Eng. And a rare fight followed.
Yet my grandfather, wounded and sent home,
Was shamefully illused by his own country,
Discharged without a pension: he died cursing,
Not the brave sportsmen who had wounded him,
But General Ostrich Feathers of Whitehall,
And Bloggs, a bullying landlord of the worst,
And Noggs, the lawyer who supported Bloggs.
Fr. There are wars and wars: often a war's a
sport,

And stays a sport until one side plays foul,
Uses a new advantage, breaks conventions.

Eng. Exactly: and sometimes a sport's a war
In its worst sense of cruelty, lies and shame.

Fr. Even within the framed rules of the sport.

Eng. In Rugby football I have killed more men
Playing full-back and tackling with ill will,
Killed them I mean in murderous intention,
Than ever I killed at Loos or Passchendaele.

At Loos I saw them running, shot them down
With a sportsman's instinct as he marks down
birds.

At Passchendaele I bayoneted a man
As one might pink a fencer with the foil.

Fr. No hate? We too had little hatred there

Unless quite seldom we were losing heart.
But see, the middle weights are drawn for now —
Soon we shall know how long our friendship lasts.
You have boxed yourself, my friend?

Eng. Yes, I have boxed,
And known the loving kindness of the victor
For the man he's knocked to pieces, afterwards
Shaking his hand and complimenting him.

(Then narrowly each watched the other's face)

Fr. Those ringside manners, I too know them well.
Agreeing always on the term "good sport."

Did you ever fight a man you could not trust,
A man who had set upon you unawares
Once before, and smashed you? Then again,
Hearing him come behind you with a rush,
Have you floored him and been forced to hammer
him,

Though he still kept one knee upon the ground,
Yes, knocked him down and had to punch him
silly

Against all rules of boxing? Then, to make sure
That he was done, have you been forced to kick
him?

Have you felt his ribs to make sure they were
smashed,

Because that man had always played you foul?

Eng. Thank God, I have not: I can truly say
My sportsmanship was never tested so.

Fr. So may it never be, my English friend!

Eng. I understand, respecting you the more
That you can face facts and explain your mind,
But did you ever see two scowling neighbours
Threaten each other in a public place?

One, the bigger and stronger, waits his time
And when the smaller fellow turns his back,
Leaps on him, hooks him sideways on the jaw,

So that he staggers, then in the name of sport
 But also anxious in mere self-defence,
 To lay that bullying fellow on his back,
 Have you too leaped in, striking at his face,
 And kept on striking? When the smaller man
 Rises again returning blow for blow,
 The man who struck him first cries out, alarmed
 "Two against one! Is this good sportsmanship
 Is this *la boxe*? No, since you break the rules
 I'll call for *la savate*; I'll use my feet."
 A rough-house follows, all three men get hurt,
 But the end is, the big lout groans "enough."
 You, then, feeling your wrongs avenged, stand off
 And taking stock of bruises, cuts and sprains,
 Remind yourself "When he called *La savate*
 I also used my feet, yes to good purpose.
 Granted he was a bully at the start,
 He's learned a lesson not forgotten soon
 And he fought gamely. Come, I'll be a sportsman,
 I'll go and shake hands, help him to his feet."
 By this time there's a big ring gathered round,
 And, look, your ally, seated on the foe,
 Batters him senseless. "My dear friend," cry you
 "Are you a sportsman? then stop hurting him."
 He answers "This great coward only shams.
 If once I loose him, up he'll jump again
 As twice he's done before, and knock me spinning.
 You talk of sport, but I with *Æsop's* frogs
 Reply 'What's sport to you is death to me'," "
 At this the crowd groans, hisses, cheers; disputes
 Which is the better sportsman, you or he —
 Then between loyalty to your brave ally
 And pride in your much vaunted sportsmanship
 Have you been torn in mind, left standing helpless
 Charged with hypocrisy, shame, perfidy?
Fr. Thank Heaven, I have not, I can say truly

My self-respect was never tested so.

Eng. So may it never be, my brave French friend.

Fr. And doctor's fees; let us not speak of
those . . .

Instead to joke about the long delay
Of our Academy in the compilation
Of their Grand Dictionnaire de la Langue
Francaise,

The full, the final, never-to-be-gainsaid:
Always perhaps they shirk the letter "s,"
Since no one dares define *le sportsmanship*?
Yet there's a word they cannot well omit
Now that the State so warmly fosters sport.
There *is* no final definition?

Eng. None.

To speak again of War, "The Sport of Kings,"
Telling a tale this time against ourselves:
The same grandfather in the same campaign
Against the Maoris, lately Christianized,
Attacked one Sunday morning in full force;
He found the Maoris not expecting him,
Devoutly praying in their tribal church.
Captured and scandalized, the Maoris asked
For explanation of this gross abuse.
They quoted Rule 4 of the Christian code.
Grandfather stoutly pleaded precedent;
Cromwell, Napoleon, Gustaf-Adolf
All fought their bloodiest battles on a Sunday.
That noble savage would have pleased Rousseau,
Dismissing precedent as a lame excuse,
He asked for sportsmanship in its pure form.
Fr. Ah! the pure form! could we recover that!
But where in history lies that golden age?

.

Soon in the understanding pause that followed

They watched their younger brothers mount the
ring,
Matched together by caprice of Fate,
Each proudly girded in his country's colours.
With first a most perfunctory glove-clasp,
They dodged, sparred, side-stepped, fell into a
clinch,
Breaking away with heavy body punches,
Battering each other till the bruises showed.
One scowled, the other's lips moved in a threat;
Panting hard, they boxed more cunningly;
Each recognized that he had met his match.
"Goodbye, friend, we are foes now," said the
brothers.
But at that word, a strange experience!
Whom should they see, walking between the tiers
Arm in arm and chattering volubly,
But Norris and Maurice? they grinned, passed,
vanished,
A pair of daylight ghosts, plain as could be.
Then brotherhood and country were no more,
Up jumped those elder brothers from their seats.
"Let the best boxer win," they cried as one,
"We take no sides, we forfeit both our bets.
Maurice and Norris! That was strange, by
Heaven!"
"Here," cried the Frenchman, "here there's
closer bond
Than between any brothers. Here we meet,
Two honest soldiers, old philosophers,
Thinking in different modes, but thinking
straight;
We speak the truth when we can speak the truth,
Hate when we must hate, find sport where we can,
And keep from sentimental juggleries,
Ready to face new conflicts as they rise,

Yet honouring our good comrades who are dead.”
Then, on my oath, they left those boxers boxing:
Arm in arm they wandered towards the gates.
Snug in a café absent-mindedly
Played dominoes, and kept no score who won;
Maurice and Norris chaffing from the shadows,
Feinting at each other with clenched fists.

ROBERT GRAVES.

THE OLD WOMAN REMEMBERS

An old woman is sitting in an almost dark room. She has placed seven candlesticks on the table. At the end of the first verse she lights a candle and puts in a candlestick and after that lights each one from the candle last lighted. She sits by the table and speaks as to herself:

SEVEN hundred and a half of years
Are gone since Strongbow took the sway,
Put Ireland under grief and tears,
A ball struck here and there at play.
When the white cities turned to flames
Who lived to hear the Masses said?
Now on the beads I'll tell out names,
And light a candle for the dead.

When John mocked in his jibing youth
Men had big names e'er he was born;
Laid on hard burdens, breaking truth,
Donall O'Brien blew the horn.
It's Munster held the flail that day;
The scattered scoffers ran for life;
They found that no great year for play,
Eleven hundred eighty-five.

(She lights a candle.)

Rebel and King, a Connacht lad
Stood in the gap at Athenry;
Phelim O'Connor, proud and glad
To shout the Connacht battle cry;
But in the losing fight he went
The hard high way that rebels go;

And so his score of years was spent
Five and six hundred years ago.

(She lights the second candle.)

When Art MacMurrough joined the rout
And faced the King of England's sword
The cards were shuffled and showed out
The trumps upon the Leinster board;
For Richard's credit ran to naught,
His fortune's fatness turned to lean;
But Art MacMurrough reigned and fought
Till fourteen hundred seventeen.

(She lights the third candle.)

O'Neill took Ulster in his hand
In fifteen hundred fifty one;
He'd have no meddlers on his land
He kept their armies on the run;
Beat Sussex on the open plain —
It's little but the Gael were free —
It was no man that put down Shane
But Scottish treachery and the sea.

(She lights the fourth candle.)

Five hundred blessings on your head
And blessings on the earth you trod,
It's well you earned the prayers are said,
Sarsfield, that was a man with God.
When King and broken Treaty lied
You brought your Wild Geese through the sea,
And out in foreign, conquering, died
In sixteen hundred ninety-three.

(She lights the fifth candle.)

With five and five score years gone by
Tone and Lord Edward struck the ball —
My grief such hurlers had to die
And leave the goal to the Gall!
So each new age breaks each new hope,
And so in eighteen-hundred-three,
Another twisting of the rope
Set Robert Emmet's spirit free.

(She lights the sixth candle.)

In Easter week the wisp was lit
Waked Dublin from her drowsy years;
I moan the battle-anger, yet
What did we ever win by tears?
The ballad singers long have cried
The shining names of far-away;
Now let them rhyme out those that died
With the three colours, yesterday.

Aye and today. That quick quenched flame,*
Thin rushlight in the dipper's hand,
Burnt out before his fullness came,
His name a Saint's, with Saints to stand.
Or him† the skillet and the mould
Had rounded right to Nature's plan;
Terence, who waned, while moons grown old
Thrice gazed on an unconquered man.

(Having lighted the seventh candle she stands up:)

This is our rosary of praise¶
For some whose names are sung or said
Through seven hundred years of days
The silver beads upon the thread. . . .

(She goes to the window as if startled and listens for a moment, then comes back and stands beside the table:)

My grief if ever they have heard
The keen on every countryside
In our dark winter, or got word!
How brother by his brother died!

But who forgives shall be forgiven.
It's likely in the Shining Land
Before that company in Heaven
From Cathal's† hand and Michael's§ hand
The barren shadow-weapons fall,
The bitter battle-angers cease;
And so God give to them and all
The blessing of his lasting peace!

A. GREGORY.

*Kelvin Barry.

†Terence McSwiney.

‡Cathal Breyha

§Michael Collins.

¶The first verses of this were written at the time of the Truce, September, 1921; the last two in September, 1923.

HERE COMES THE THIEF

HERE comes the thief
Men nickname Time,
Oh, hide you, leaf,
And hide you, rhyme.
Leaf, he would take you
And leave you rust.
Rhyme, he would flake you
With spotted dust.
Scurry to cover,
Delicate maid
And serious lover.
Girl, bind the braid
Of your burning hair;
He has an eye
For the lusciously fair
Who passes by.
O lover, hide —
Who comes to plunder
Has the crafty stride
Of unheard thunder.
Quick — lest he snatch,
In his grave need,
And sift and match,
Then sow like seed
Your love's sweet grief
On the backward air,
With the rhyme and the leaf
And the maiden's hair.

HAZEL HALL.

THE MISSED TRAIN

How I was caught
Hieing home, after days of allure,
And forced to an inn — small, obscure —
At the junction, fret-fraught!

How civil my face
To get them to chamber me there —
A roof I had passed scarce aware
That it stood at the place.

And how all the night
I had dreams of the unwitting cause
Of my lodgment. How lonely I was;
How consoled by her sprite!

Thus one time to me. . . .
Dim wastes of dead years bar away
Then from now! But such happenings today
Fall to lovers, may be.

Years, years as gray seas,
Truly, stretch now between! Less and less
Shrink the visions then great in me. Yes,
Then in me. Now in these.

THOMAS HARDY.

ESTRILDIS

(LOCRINE COMES UPON ESTRILDIS BATHING IN
THE BROOK BEFORE HER CAVE)

HE came upon her bathing in the brook
Before her cave, not dreaming any near.
He lay deep in the tufted grass to look,
Dreading to lose the vision standing there.
He watched the warm wind lift her glorious hair,
And "Jove," he thought, in watching her afar,
"I would not be on any other star!"

Her face was turned from him, so on he crept
To the brook's very edge, there hid from sight.
Deeper and deeper in the stream she stept
That washed upon her smooth hips sunny
bright,
And now her hips were overcovered, quite,
And now the dimple in her waist was lost,
And little waves up to her shoulder tossed.

Sudden she turned, he saw the downy hair
Beneath her arm, and lay deep in the grass,
And scarce dared breathe, she stood so near his
lair,
And sat so light on each wave that did pass,
Just brushing it; she feigned she held a glass,
And played she was the mermaid of a grot,—
And all the while he watched she knew it not.

But now, his mortal patience killed outright,
He started up and called her by her name,
She stood as rooted, quaking with affright,
Then saw who called, and blushing red with
shame,

Made for the deeper water whence she came,
And from that vantage angerly she spoke,
Bidding him back — then into laughter broke,

For she was glad that he had come that day.

Yet did she cease not bidding him begone,
Until, as for that time, Locrine gave way,
And left Estrildis in the pool alone.

In that green place a million king-cups shone,
And on that cloth-of-gold, her bathing done,
She basked her naked beauty in the sun,

And through her tresses peered with upturned eye,
Up through the gold rifts of the poplar trees.

There was a murmur in the grasses high,
A lazy sound of summer on the leas,
And summer-drowsy, droning honey-bees.

Silence has flatterers that about her keep,
To breathe her praise. Estrildis half-asleep,

Thought upon Locrine: "Gone, alas, the while!

Would he were here, would he were here with
me!

And I who bade him hence, did I not smile?

Oh no! I chid him most discourteously."

Afar a shepherd's piping on the lea
Chimed with her complaints, for whatsoe'er he meant,
Sweet music voices the heart's discontent.

(Shepherd)

There's a weald in the West-land,

Where Margrét herself hideth,

There's a quick stream through the bracken,

In the land where she abideth.

Like red corn in the sunset,
Such a colour is her hair,
My spirit longs to touch it,
And linger ever there.

Here over many mountains
Is the setting of the sun,
Where the Shepherd sits at nightfall,
So weary and undone.

Great eyes at the shot-window!
It is dusk upon the wealds —
Margréte, ha, Margréte!
Look hither to these fields!

Locrine in fields afar now turned his eyes,
Back to the pale wherein his lady lay,
Back to the goal wherefrom his journey lies,
“I will but look from far, and go my way
And breathe her air,” he thinks, “but no word
say,
Or mark the grot where nightly she doth dwell,
And glut my fancy on an empty shell.”

And with this thought he climbed the craggy pass,
And gazed down from the turfy mountain's
crest.

He saw Estrildis stretched upon the grass,
He saw the wet grass that her body pressed,
And the black hair cling wet about her breast,
And leapt, and ran, and came to his delight,
And flung his brown arms round her body white.

With joy and love they wore the golden day,
And in his west they saw the great sun down,
They saw the moon arise the colour of hay,

And all that sun-drenched land grow dull and
brown,

And now one star floats out above the town,
A purple mist drifts low upon the leas,
And spectral cattle dream beneath the trees.

O Moon, lie long upon Mount Latmos' steep,

And linger long the night to mortal men;
Long with the boy Endymion strive or sleep,
And let the noisy cocks not crow again.

The day will quite displace thy gentler strain,
Thy willows and thy waters hushèd song,
Thy silences, thy shadows black and long.

KENNETH HARE.

THE PURITAN

THE Puritan through Life's sweet garden goes
To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose,
And hopes to please by this peculiar whim,
The God who fashioned it and gave it him.

KENNETH HARE.

ON PAINSWICK BEACON

HERE lie counties five in a waggon wheel.
There quick Severn like a silver eel
Wriggles through pastures green and pale stubble.
There sending up its quiet coloured bubble
Of earth May Hill floats on a flaming sky,
And, marvelling at all, forgetting trouble,
Here — home again — stand I!

F. W. HARVEY.

OLD GALWAY

FAR in a garden's wreckage —
Stark in the wind-cleared moon —
Grandeers on wave-green marble
Of Connemara stone
Gleam down the courtly pavings,
Where windfalls are strewn
Tripping steps lead by the stringmen
Thumbing an old tune.

One fashions in moon-woven satins,
High combs in her castled hair,
Shawled in dissolving laces
Foamed to green air —
She in the deeps of whose wild eyes
The lost armadas stir;
No wonder the ghosts are merry
Jostling by her!

After whose lovely slim movements
Spain lives in a Galway mile —
Gallants on wave-level marble,
She on a pale lover's smile;
Heart that she danced on a dagger,
Dream of green nights and be still —
Dreams fade back to my ashes
Cairning a grey hill!

F. R. HIGGINS.

THE VIGIL

I've tidied up my little room,
And lit my lamp against the gloom,
And now I've but to sit and wait
Until he comes. He'll not be late
Tonight, I know. . . . The passing feet
Go hurrying, loitering, down the street,
But I would recognise his tread
Even if I were lying dead
And buried and he chanced to pass
Beside my tombstone in the grass. . . .
My table shines like glass, the shelf
Is filled with willow-pattern delf
Smiling in blue and white array;
The Chinese jar he brought one day
As a surprise for me, he said,
I've filled with roses white and red:
Early today I hurried out,
Before the people were about,
To buy the best the flower-girl had.
They smell so sweet I would be glad
To buy them always, but they're dear
In London when the winter's here.

Tonight the very clock seems slow;
Tick-tock! Tick-tock! The minutes go
Unwillingly as children pass
A sweet-shop, staring at the glass
With greedy eyes. . . . I'll turn my head,
And watch the fire's deep caves instead;
I will not look again until
It strikes the hour. . . . It's grown so still
I almost hear my heart's quick beat
Sound in its prison. . . . Down the street
A dog barks. . . . Just five minutes more
And I shall hear him at my door:

He will not tap nor linger there,
But come straight over to my chair,
And I'll pretend I did not hear
Him enter, and he will creep near
And kiss me suddenly — oh, sweet!
Time, speed my darling's hurrying feet
And bring him to me soon, so soon. . . .
How dark it is outside! The moor
Hangs like a little silver thread
Across night's curtain overhead;
In trembling lines the street lamps run
Like raindrops in the morning sun;
And, pools of gold dropped from the sky,
Across the road the puddles lie. . . .

The clock has struck! The hour grows late.
And in my silent room I wait:
He should be here! He should be here!
Yet must I sit alone, though fear
Dart through the meshes of my mind
And shake me like a raging wind.
Terror runs crying through my head —
How should I know if he were dead?
How should I know? I'd wait here still,
Watching the minutes crawl, until
The morning's ghostly figure crept
Into a room where no one slept,
Into a room where none dared stir
For fear Life should remember her. . . .

He does not come. . . . O clock, be still!
Speedy or slow you work your will. . . .
He does not come! He cannot care!
His eye has caught a face more fair,
Younger than mine. May turns to May,
And Age has swept his fingers grey
Lightly across my cheeks and brow. . . .
He has forgotten me! But how

May I forget if year on year
Shall see me sitting lonely here,
Dreaming an idle dream that's past?
. . . *Ah, God! His step — his step at last!*

BRIAN HILL.

MENTIS TRIST

NEVER fear the phantom bird
Meditating in the Fens;
Night will come and quench your eyes,
Blind at last like other men's;
Never fear the tales you heard
In the rhetoric of lies.

Nothing here will challenge you,
Not the heron, tall and white,
Countersign upon the edge
Of the waterfall of night.
This is Avalon's canoe,
Eden murmurs in the sedge.

Here. My hand in pledge of rest.
Drift at random, all is well.
Twilight is a slow lagoon,
Dark will be a citadel.
Travellers who know the west
But report the waning moon.

In the citadel of peace
Hang the trophies of the world,
Yet no barons don their mail,
And no pennant is unfurled.
Daily robe, the Golden Fleece,
Daily cup, the Holy Grail.

ROBERT HILLYER.

MOO!

SUMMER is over, the old cow said,
And they'll shut me up in the draughty shed
To milk me by lamplight in the cold,
But I won't give much for I am old.
It's long ago that I came here
Gay and slim as a woodland deer;
It's long ago that I heard the roar
Of Smith's white bull by the sycamore.
And now there are bones where my flesh should be,
My backbone sags like an old roof-tree,
And an apple snatched in a moment's frolic
Is just so many days of colic.
I'm neither a Jersey nor Holstein now,
But only a faded sort of cow.
My calves are veal, and I had as lief
That I could lay me down as beef.
Somehow, they always kill by halves;
Why not take me when they take my calves?
Birch turns yellow and sumac red,
I've seen this all before, she said.
I'm tired of the field and tired of the shed.
There's no more grass, there's no more clover,
Summer is over, summer is over.

ROBERT HILLYER.

NOCTURNE

IF the deep wood is haunted, it is I
Who am the ghost; not the tall trees
Nor the white moonlight slanting down like rain
Filling the hollows with bright pools of silver.

A long train whistle serpentines around the hill
Now shrill, now far away.
Tell me, from what dark, smoky terminal,
What train sets out for yesterday?

Or, since our spirits take off and resume
Their flesh as travellers their cloaks, O tell me
 where,
In what age and what country you will come
That I may meet you there.

ROBERT HILLYER.

UNICORN MAD

WET-ARMED, sleet-footed,
The mad witty gales
Ruin wildly up the hills,
Rocket up the dales:
In their slippery arms
Bushels of hail,
They do their daft seeding
Over hill, over dale:
Smash their crooked furrows
Through all things that grow:
Alas, that in the green tilth
Barren hail they sow!
Is it world's end they bring,
That the roaring pine
And the fierce old thorn
Lie down with the celandine?
That the thunder-headed oaks
Converse with the grass,
And the kindly vine
Lies with the upas?

So the winds return, but frost
Catches what the winds have lost,
Blackens rock-hid moss,
Curls the hardy bugloss:
Feather-like, bird-like,
The humorous snow
Spreads its tender down
Over all things that grow.
Under her cold care
Eggs of cold are hatched there,
Till the lion lies stark
Beside the long-toed lark,
And the tiny curled mice
Shrivel like wood-lice.

Pity, pity poor Unicorn
That he cannot now die,
Bow his neck,
Close his eye,
Lay his lovely horn low,
Leave his body in the earth
Where the brown roots go!
Now he sees his heart's desire
Scorched more fiercely than in fire,
All the whole world dead,
All the noisy earth dead,
With his icicled eye.
Wild he flings his glassy mane
Till its bells chime again:
Delicate monkeys nestled close
In his long and waving hair
Whimper in a mute despair,
Feel the ice about their toes.
. . . Where each shadowy soul goes
Who tells? Who knows?
Cold is brooding on the earth,
Cold has sealed the dripping rain:
Heavily the ice crawls
Up the dead waterfalls,
Grinds and shudders up the hill:
Cold can madden, cold can kill,
Cold has him by the brain!
He has lived a million ages,
He shall live a million more
With his clear soul froze,
And a heart where frenzy rages.

Pity, pity poor Unicorn
That he cannot now die!
Loud he whinnies forth his pain

To the snow-winged wheeling Roc;
Leaps four-footed in the air
Till the roots of the water-springs
Snap and shudder at the shock:
Now he stands stock-still,
With trembling nostril sniffs the snow
Where the palm was used to grow,
Where he used to munch his fill:
Conjuring that he is young
In forests half a league high,
All his horn with grapes hung,
Lotus tart to his tongue,
Moonlight in his moist eye,
And clear starlight that kindles fires
Of wild, indefinite desires:
Pity, pity Unicorn
That he cannot die!

Now he's Cassandra
Trumpeting aloud,
Calling aloud
Things of fear
With none to hear:
Now Io, he, far driven
Gallopung mutely
By the flickering tooth
Of lightning stung:
And now that Jew
Who creeps, hiding,
That no hill may see,
No river guess or see
To curse his misery.

Where the Phoenix makes his pyre,
Outcast in night he snuffs the fire,
Watching with unseeing eyes

How everlasting Phoenix dies:
Where Cerberus on the leash leans
And trebly rumbles forth his love
Of Midnight stalking on the earth
A hundred thousand feet above,
Unicorn may not go by,
Unicorn may not die.
He has lived a million ages,
He shall live a million more
With his clear soul frore
And a heart where frenzy rages.

Only on a wild night
When the winds run low
For fear of the glaring stars
That hunt them all the night through,
You may hear his hooves go,
You may hear his wild spring
Clean across the thorny lightning
And the piled thunder too:
You may hear the heartless chiming
Of his ice-tongued mane
Like a cold bell mocking
Mocking, mocking human pain.

RICHARD HUGHES.

THE LIVING ROOT

I PAUSED and stepped back, half entranced,
Through the darkness of the alley-way,
As naked Indians gravely danced
Into the plaza where the moonlight lay.

When they had passed, I waited there
And listened to the drum and shout
Die slowly into shaken air;
And then I sighed and turned about

To find between me and the wall
That held the alley's deepest shade
An Indian standing, still and tall,
So near me that I felt afraid.

He was part of silence and of night,
And when I tried I could not see
His eyes flash any glint of light.
. . . I passed him as I would a tree.

WILLARD JOHNSON.

A PIANOFORTE RECITAL

A KEYBOARD.

Fact everywhere,
An atmosphere, too, of Fact.
She came.
The keyboard lay stretched supine.
The atmosphere closed upon her every movement,
Defining her sharply in the light —
Just those forms, just that life, just that warmth,
Color, glow, flesh — precise, mathematical.
The atmosphere etched her arms,
Bare, perfect, live;
Arms lax, drooping by her sides,
Poise erect,
She sat, still, by the keyboard.
The audience sat up.
Fact spoke clearly
Of mahogany, gilded walls, upholstery,
Dress suits, satin, lace, silk,
Backs of heads, bare shoulders, and stiff collars.
The keyboard lay stretched,
Supine, black, white — ivory.

II

Suddenly,
Like a branch of the willow
Lifted on a breath of the wind,
Stooping low, low, down to the stream,
Her arms lifted in air,
Gently to bend, bend down to the keyboard:
And the keyboard woke
And ran music
Like the stream!
Like a flower
That bends upon her stalk,

She bent her head
Lower, nearer, nearer,
Breathed, and spoke
To her white prancing palfreys —
Her fingers — galloping the ivory surf,
And the notes rushed and leaped,
Danced and whirled and scurried
Like nymphs to the water's edge:
Ran before her chasing fingers
Down the scale,
Up the scale,
Round the gilded walls,
Up the straight backs of men,
Up the stiff backs of women and chairs,
Ruffling the dignity of Fact!
Down the veins of rheumatic old gentlemen,
Down the capillaries of old Lumbago,
Up and down, laughing and trilling,
And skipping and screaming and
Thundering!
Ruffling all the dignity of Fact,
Unfurling worlds within worlds of Truth!

III

She ceased.
The atmosphere was filled
With the flying débris of Fact,
And the sprites of Truth
Still danced and made merry.
The Audience sat up
And clapped, sat up and clapped —
Clapped the elves away!
Truth gathered up her faëry worlds
And fled,
The dignity of Fact was restored.

FREDOON KABRAJI.

XMAS TIME

A LITTLE lonely girl
Went calmly off to bed
And all the Xmas that she had
Was in her little head.

WALTA KARSNER.
(Nine years old.)

HOH-SHUKU-SEI-TEN

(Honourable congratulations from afar to the Japanese Prince upon his wedding, January 26, 1924.)

Now our peerless Fuji-Yama
High above the far horizon
With cloud-kissing, silvery peak,
Flawless with perpetual snow,
All-resplendent in the shimmering
Of the sun-rays on the heights,
Greets with an ecstatic smile
This so great and joyous Day.

In the rich enchanted air
Of the mellow Nippon Garden
Wherein grow the virtuous Pine-Tree,
Symbolising Perseverance
And the Faith that never tires,
And the graceful, swaying Bamboo,
Emblem of Straightforwardness,
With the dainty Plum-Bloom, vying
In its Grace and Purity
With the Beauty of the Bride,
Which today fills all our eyes,
Comes the snow-white, stately Tsuru,*
Perched upon his ancient Turtle,
Symbol of long, happy Life,
Singing loud the KIMI-GA-YO:
"Long Life to our noble Prince,"
The illustrious Descendant

* "Tsuru," a Japanese word for sacred crane or stork, whose life, according to our legend, endures for a thousand years, while that of "Kame" (sacred turtle) is supposed to last ten thousand years. Hence very good omen for the wedlock, etc.—G. K.

Of the Founder of Dai-Nippon,
Till Pebbles into huge Rocks grow
Moss-covered by Thy years.

GONNOSKE KOMAI.

AND SHE SAID AND I SAID —

SHE lost her sons in the war,
and her husband died of grief
but she goes on,
building fires in fire-places,
airing out rooms,
tidying tables,
smiling straight smiles,
for boarders in Bloomsbury.
She once said —
watching me writing something —
you seem happy, sir? —
and I paused
and I said —
looking at what she had done —
seeing her even in crevices —
yes —
and she smiled another straight smile.
And she said —
it must be grand writing things? —
and said still more with her eyes —
and I said —
looking at what I was doing —
running my eye down the column —
running it up again —
finding too little of her —
and much too much of me —
no.
She seemed puzzled —
paused —
ventured —
but it's fun, isn't it? —
it looks like fun? —
and I said —
telling a lie somehow —

telling a bit of a lie —
this once, perhaps,
yes, this once.
You'll excuse me disturbing you, sir —
she said with a crooked smile —
and closed the door so quietly —
I thought she was still in the room.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

STORM — GATHERING

I, THE protagonist, begin in pride, merely to
measure

The power of this momentary magnet of lips and
eyes,

And find you then, so startled, so by surprise,
Bend laughingly to their pleasure.

Brought breathless to face the thing again today,
We must be distant, cold now — we say —
knowing the danger.

But already lips, limbs and arms dream toward
the stranger,
Whatever we say.

And now, tonight again, before even April is over,
We are breast to breast again, confiding with
secret laughter;

Till you grow suddenly tired, and weak with your
lover.

And now, in the moment after,

It is you who are protagonist; and I who rest
My tired head against you, with a boy's wonder
At the great womanly strength of you brooding
under

The weight of your breast.

And so at last we are taken — we are tossed and
blown

Out to a strange high darkness we strangely
understand,

Comforting each other into the blind void of that
land —

Borne out beyond — beyond life — and lost
utterly — and alone . . .

MAURICE LESEMAN.

EXERCISE IN LOGIC

I GAVE you a picture once,
A great crimson sun floating beside a gnarled
bamboo.

The sun has faded;
For which reason, I think nothing of the painter,
Until I reflect that many pigments cannot bear
the dazzle of excessive light.

For, my Dear, have you not sat opposite it daily?
I ask you, is there truth in this?

AMY LOWELL.

MURDEROUS WEAPONS

I SEND a handful of cherry skulls
Bouncing and stuttering on the pavement;
And my thoughts lie stiff
On pallid paper.

I tore the flesh from the cherries
With my teeth;
And my pen butchered
The beauty in my mind.

MARIE LUHRS.

IMMIGRANTS

At midnight, weary souls depart
 In wonder toward the setting stars;
At dawn, incoming wayfarers
 Begin to batter at the bars.

And as the east grows dimly red,
 Oh, foolish, brave past all romance,
Alone, unarmed, each enters in,
 Naked to every wind of chance.

GENEVIEVE LOUISE LYNCH.

THE BIRD ON YGDRASIL

IN the blowing tops of Ygdrasil,
Over the Astral sea,
My spirit like a splendid bird
Sings in infinity.
Sometimes I hear the psalm he sings:
With baby words I try
To sing in time that boundless rhyme
Beneath this little sky.

On the dazzling tree of Ygdrasil,
In God's vast summer day —
Where sits the seven-horned triple sun
That lights the Milky Way,
My spirit on the blossomed bough
In sapphire climes unknown,
'Mid streaming glory, gazes down
On this dull flesh and bone.

Sometimes I feel his favouring smile
On that high perch afar,
And smiling up the bowery sky
I hail him from my star,
And ponder in this puny world
With pigmy thoughts of mine
How this poor gipsy-sprite dare claim
A relative so fine.

On the dizzy heights of Ygdrasil
In my lord's boundless gaze
The earth looks like a diamond bright
With its twinkling years and days:
Oh! dearest of the petalled stars
That dance on all the tree
To him this sparkling bud of heaven
That folds the heart of me.

On the deathless tree of Ygdrasil
When the hymning tempest rings
My spirit rides the ranging boughs,
And spreads his rainbow wings;
And down the lustrous whirlwind's breath,
Where flaring comets stream,
He wafts that mystic merriment
That wakes me when I dream.

Far on that golden-fruited Tree,
In the everlasting rays
The spirit sits that whets my wits
And glorifies my days:
Oh, scarce know I — mixed mud and sky,
If bird or seraph he
Who lights me with that glittering eye
In blue eternity.

JAMES A. MACKERETH.

IMPULSE

Would you jig, O lusty loin?
O brain, would you dance so soon?
But love who pays the fiddler's coin
Must call the tune.

Not when you would, O soul,
Not, O flesh, when you will,
But when love nods and the wild drums roll
And the fiddles shrill.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

YEARS AGO

WHY should I think of spring in France
When each new April's new mischance
Of gypsy magic and green change
Leaves earth familiarly strange?
Were there not springs before that spring?
Was there not whist and whispering
Of wind in willow until then?
And shall there not be springs again?
I can remember times more near
And longer past than that strange year;
Hip-booted springs, half faun, half boy,
Over the lakes in Illinois,
Following the swollen runnels down
To beaches where the waves broke brown,
Shaking the air, and the landward breeze
Smelled of fresh water and far pine trees,
And overnight in the steep ravine
The first hepatica grew green;
And brief, too brief, New Haven Junes,
Green mornings, harbor-smelling noons,
And twilights flat on the shadowy turf
Washed with the footfalls' shallow surf,
With a drifting voice far off and sweet,
And the rumble of wheels on the Chapel Street,
Drowsing and talking whimsily
Of Noah's ark and a life at sea.
I can remember springs more near,
Yet never when the winter's clear
And there's an earthy smoke about
And sluggard black flies blunder out,
Never do I remember these,
But seeing tint the apple trees
I see the orchards north from Meaux
Haggard with dust where the wagons go,

And smelling plough lands under rain
I smell the soft French earth again
Cut deep beneath the clumsy guns,
And hearing how some whistler runs
His broken scale, hear then the song
That sunny days and all day long
A dead boy used to sing and sing.

But there were songs before that spring.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

WIND AT NIGHT

THE sky is reeling like an angry flood;
The gods are out, I glimpse their snowy sails
Above the trees. What legends and old tales
Are they now sowing, on what mischief bent,
What worlds in ruin will they leave behind,
Far constellations sacked, suns countermined?
I hear wild chanties, heady, insolent,
Roared by their steersmen, drifting down the
wind.

BEULAH MAY.

JEZEBEL

WE know she lives upon that thorny hill,
We see her lights and watch her chimneys spark —
But her we have not seen. The old wives say,
Remembering when she came, her ways were dark,
And that her only name is Jezebel.
One gray idiot tells his tale of love,
Mixing her beauty with the stars of May.

Perhaps we idly wonder if she wore
A flower in her hair, or if the beat
Of her small heels upon the sidewalk stone
Was heard at midnight through our lamplit street;
Or why it was she went away to live,
With all her perfumed satin and her lace,
In that wind-beaten, far-off place, alone.

We never wonder more of Jezebel.
We have our work to do and God is hard.
Serving the wheels or guiding straight the plow
Leaves little thought of frankincense and nard.
Yet, she is like deep waters of the Spring
Running along our minds; down at the roots,
The miracle that makes the April bough.

No man goes near that house above the town.
No man has seen her shadow on the blind,
Though through the night, till dawn, the tallow
drips.

But, sometimes, when the chains of duty bind,
Because we reach too eagerly for Heaven,
Sometimes, like little bells within our sleep,
It seems we hear the music of her lips.

Then we have left what we most dearly love,
And, momentary lords of Heaven and Hell,

We have gone up through briars and the night,
And seen the secret face of Jezebel.
There, in that still confessional where she waits,
We all have had the blessing of her breast,
As over us she leaned to blow the light.

Up in that room above our godly town,
We have denied the vows we bleed to keep,
We have torn off the lying masks we wear,
And sown without the fear that we must reap.
The young, the pious, and the old alike
Have been glad penitents upon her heart —
She has absolved us by her kisses, there.

She has forgiven us and let us go,
And we have wakened in our homes again,
To hear the breathing of an earthly bride,
To watch the real world blooming on the pane.
The field, the wheel, the desk have called once
more,
And we have stooped to pick the slender threads
By which we weave the patterns of our pride.

That day, we do not bargain with the sun,
Or curb our pride because one angel fell —
We are the wilful brotherhood who sing!
We bend, without a thought of Jezebel,
Above our work, no longer do we drudge;
We are, awhile, like happy, armored men
God's searching whip of anger cannot sting!

SCUDDER MIDDLETON.

A LITTLE BOY

You are a little boy
Wearing your first school cap
And gartered stockings.
You are accompanied daily to your school-gate
By your mother's charlady.
Every morning you and your mother's charlady
Are absorbed in converse;
Converse that is occasionally gay, more often
solemn,
Zestful unfailingly,
And of unintermittent friendliness.

Today you are a little late,
And your mother's charlady
Has, I gather, suggested
That you should unbutton your overcoat
As you walk,
In order that, having reached the cloakroom,
You may the more speedily shed it.
And you have protested,
With scandalised amazement,
That on no account can overcoats be unbuttoned
In the street.
"Not in the street, Mrs. Finnybow, I tell you!"
And your mother's charlady has grown flustered
By reason of your emphasis.
She has murmured distressedly:
"Well, it wouldn't hurt, dearie,
Not if you was to."
And you have passed on,
Your hand within the hand of your mother's
charlady,
Reiterating with redoubled emphasis,

“Not in the street, Mrs. Finnybow!
Oh, Mrs. Finnybow, not in the street!”

And I have reflected that some day
You will be a man.
And then you will remember
(Or perhaps you will not remember)
That once your mother had a charwoman
Called Mrs. Finnybow,
And that Mrs. Finnybow accompanied you daily
To your first school.

But your round-eyed solemnity,
Your beautiful seriousness,
Your sudden gaieties,
Your unintermittent friendliness,
Your zest,
Your outraged propriety,
These, little boy,
You never will remember.
And, since they seem to me
Not wholly unworthy of remembrance,
I here record them.

SUSAN MILES.

THE YOUNG GIRL WEDDED

LIKE that big bee droning
Along the shadowed beams,
Into my life Love blundered,
Through my defence of dreams.

Into my life so quiet,
Like a long loft where hidden
My girlish thoughts fluttered —
All worldly else unbidden

In that stealthy silence —
And only now and then
Swift sunflecks of peculiar joys
Danced and vanished again.

There Love the bee found me,
Led the expectant throng,
Till all my world resounded
With their tumultuous song,

And strange aching troubles
I never knew before,
And hiving doubts and sorrows —
But O, the honey-store!

GERALD MILLER.

TEN YEARS OLD

(An Autobiographical Episode)

I HEAR them whispering — what is it?
“Lizzie Wescott — hush!”
Where is she? Yesterday she was here —
So nice, so pretty, with curly hair —
Here at her desk, like me.
It’s something awful — where is she?
“Hush — Lizzie Wescott is dead.”
Dead.
What is it to be dead?

It is to be white — and still —
And to lie in a coffin
And be buried in the ground.
Lizzie Wescott will be buried in the ground.

To be sure she was old, six years older than me —
Sixteen.
But that wasn’t so very old.
Her curly hair will be buried in the ground.

Can we see her lying white and still
Before they put her in the ground?
No, they won’t let us.

.

It was hard to go to bed,
And think of her in the dark.
And it’s hard to come to school and hear them
whispering.
It’s something more — oh, tell me!
Tell me!

"She did it, hush — she took a poison, she killed
herself —
She committed suicide."

Oh hush — don't say it — why must I listen?
What do they call it? —
"Suicide."

Then she wanted to lie white and still, curly hair
and all,
And be buried forever in the ground.
Why?

But we musn't ask why — nobody will tell.
We can crowd around her house — where she is
lying white and still,
But nobody comes out — nobody will ever tell us.
Why?

Then a person can shut them all out — all the
other children,
And school, and our green back-yard, and the
lake, and the sky;
And lie down in her bed, and do it all alone,
And never open her mouth to say no when they
put her in the ground!

"Commit suicide," they call it.

.

But what does God think of it? and Jesus?
She used to come to Sunday-school —
Perhaps the minister will tell us.

"Think where she is now!" he says — and he's
almost crying.

And I have to cry — we all have to cry out loud.
“Think where she is now!” — he says it again
and again.

Where is she now then? Didn't they put her in
the ground —
White and still, with curly hair?
But oh yes, she had something else —
She had a soul!
What is that — a soul?

It's something inside of you that you can't see —
Something that tells you about God,
And flies out when you die
Like smoke from a fire.

And her little soul sinned a great sin —
God Himself, high on His Throne in Heaven,
Forgiving my sins every night when I pray to
Him —
God Himself could never forgive so great a sin.
So her little soul is burning now in hell,
And will never burn up forever.

How could she do it! — she liked to dance in the
sun!

How could she lie down stiff, and sin so great a sin,
And send her little soul to burn in hell forever!

Suicide — even God could not forgive her!
“Think where she is now!”

It's awful — too awful to think of.
Why do I have to think of it?
It's too awful for God to think of, sitting there
happy on His Great White Throne,

With angels around him.

How could he send her little soul to burn in hell
forever!

He couldn't!

She loved to dance in the sun, and she put them
all out —

The grass and the sky.

She had curly hair, and pretty dresses, and she
smoothed them all out

To lie down stiff and still

Under the ground.

She made the day night, and the night darker —

When I shut my eyes in the closet, it's not so dark.

She said hush to all the voices, and the dog's
barking,

And the proud trotting of horses when they race
up and down,

And the shouting of all the girls and boys.

She was grown up —

She might have lived to be very old,

With white hair like Grandma.

I used to see her every day, and now I'll never
see her again.

How could she do it?

.

It's easy then —

Between day-time and day-time she did it,

In one little night,

And she never told anybody — of course she
couldn't.

In the morning they found her — they thought
she was sleeping in her bed,

But she was lying white and still.

It's easy — anybody might do it —
Yes, even me!
I'm not too little to shut out Wezie and Rover,
And Mama and Papa and the big willow-tree,
And lie down still and white
And be buried in the ground.
I'm afraid I'll have to.

Why do I think of it all the time,
God?
Please take the thought away from me —
I don't want to!
It's too dark for a little girl down there,
And too cold.
Take it away!

He doesn't take it away.
If I step on that crack in the sidewalk I'll have
to do it —
Oh awful, if I should step on that crack!
Help me over it, God — surely You don't want
me to do it!
Thank You!
Oh, help me!

I couldn't tell Wezie — no, never! —
She would laugh.
Nor Mama, nor anybody.
There's only God to help me, and He's very far
away,
And very old.
I couldn't tell anybody!

. . . .

Why am I running so fast —
Running away!

Oh, why did I see it —
That big blue bottle with *Poison* on it, and a
skull — and two bones!
Now I'll have to do it —
It's right there — so near!
How can I help it now?

If I step on that red rose in the carpet I'll have
to take it —
One swallow would be enough.
If I step on that rose I'll have to open the closet
door,
And take out the bottle and drink some.
Oh, help me not to! —
I don't want to fall white and still,
And be buried in the ground.

Why did they put it there so near —
For me?
I'm afraid to pass that closet —
I'm afraid, afraid!
I'm afraid all the time of the skull on it —
When I wake up in the night it laughs at me.
God, surely You don't want a little girl to sin so
great a sin,
And shut You out in the sky,
And be put out of sight in the ground.

.

Every day and every night just the same,
That rose in the carpet is always there —
I don't want to step on it!
If I have to do it, what will You say to my little
flying soul —

When I am lying white and still
Down in the ground?

What did You say to her soul? — she didn't want
to either.

What did You say?

HARRIET MONROE

EXIT

THE day goes faltering toward the tumbled west,
Ragged and old and muttering, in his thought,
Of grievous wrongs, and crippled and oppressed,
He wears the ruin that the storm has wrought.
The prowling wind will never let him be,
The blinking stars lean out to stare at him;
The old man is too bitter-blind to see:
His wits are wandering and his eyes are dim.

The hills have opened for his going out,
Where gaunt trees mock him with grotesque
goodbys,
In a great wind that gathers to a shout
And sends him tottering down the angry skies —
Gone, with his mumbling and his tattered pack,
And none cares whither. . . . He will not
come back.

DAVID MORTON.

HORSES

THOSE lumbering horses in the steady plough,
On the brown field — I wonder why, just now,
They seemed so terrible, so wild and strange,
Like magic power on the stony grange.

Perhaps some childish hour has come again,
When I watched fearful through the blackening
rain

Their hooves like pistons in an ancient mill
Move up and down, yet seem as standing still.

Their conquering hooves which trod the stubble
down

Were ritual which turned the field to brown,
And their great hulks were seraphim of gold,
Or mute ecstatic monsters on the mould.

And oh, the rapture when, one furrow done,
They marched broad-breasted to the sinking sun!
The light flowed off their bossy sides in flakes,
The furrows rolled behind like struggling snakes.

But when at dusk with steaming nostrils home
They came, they seemed gigantic in the gloam,
And warm and glowing with mysterious fire
Which lit their smouldering bodies on the mire.

Their eyes as brilliant and as wide as night
Gleamed with a cruel apocalyptic sight.
Their manes the leaping ire of the wind
Lifted with rage invisible and blind.

Ah! now it fades! it fades! and I must pine
Again for that dread country crystalline,
Where the blank field and the still-standing tree
Were bright and fearful presences to me.

EDWIN MUIR.

IN A DANCE

THAT you have come to see
Under all things the flesh —
What does it prove?
Fabric and shining knee
Still intermesh,
And no less slenderly fresh
The dancers move.

This much at least is true
In a world of spurious wonder,
Flesh lying under
Texture and form and hue,
Wallows — and sings — and dies —
And after all beautiful things
Disconsolately cries.

Wrapped in the web of the loom
For a while it shines and rejoices,
But at length inclines to the voices
Of the inner room.

Things we see in a dance
Seem momentous and sweet —
Shoulders gleam, and feet
Rhythmic retreat and advance.

JESSICA NELSON NORTH.

SONNET

Who would have thought that eyelids could be
 dear,
Or anything as tangible as hands?
Who would have thought that mere material
 strands
Of hair could have the power to draw me near?
That shoulders with my heart could interfere,
Sending out strange, imperious commands?
And is there any sage who understands
The pleasing convolutions of an ear?

So if I will not let you read in peace,
Because of yearnings quite beyond control,
Ponder with me what vital facts are these —
The lure of soul for flesh and flesh for soul.
And meditate how faintly lags behind
Our long-extolled supremacy of mind.

JESSICA NELSON NORTH.

MINIATURES

I

A MONKEY bears a babe at dead of night;
And for her young the cage of monkeys fight.
The keeper finds her, broken and bereft,
Hugging one little paw — all that is left.

II

A heron rose, flapped down the wind,
And left one silver plume behind;
A dainty pen with which to bless
The joys of solitariness.

III

The vague of dusk, with dim and starry sleight,
Bade fern-owl purr and trimmed the glow-worm's
light;
Wakened a hedge-pig; summoned up a snail,
Like goblin ship the lonely dew to sail.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

I WOULD not be a bird
When wind is in the trees,
I would not be a starling
For all his melodies.

As I went past the orchard
The sun had almost set,
And all aloft the elm-tree
A thousand starlings met.

All their tongues were dry,
They whistled kling and gee,
They looked up at the sky,
And they looked down at me.

Brave be every heart
And steady every wing,
For dark night to shelter
Drives hedger, priest and king.

I would not be a starling,
I would not be a bird,
As they all rose together
And their wings drummed and whirred.

FRANK PREWETT.

CAPTAIN CARPENTER

CAPTAIN CARPENTER rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got well-nigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose forevermore.

Captain Carpenter mounted another day
And straightway rode into a surly rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as may
The captain did not wait upon prologue.

But drew upon him out of his great heart
The other swung against him with a club
And cracked his two legs at the shinny part
And let him roll and stick like any tub.

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
From male and female took he sundry harms
And met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more arms."

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
I would he had delivered half his blows
But where she should have made off like a hind
The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows.

Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
To a surly rogue that used him in this wise
O Jesus ere his threescore and ten years
Another had pinched out his sweet blue eyes.

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
And sallied from the gate for hells despite
I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemies yet there were to fight?

“Is there an adversary drunk with fame
Who will risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart’s flame
These are the perils he is cast among.

“But if he can he has a pretty choice
From an anatomy with little to lose
Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
Or whether it be my round red heart he choose.”

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
Stepping in perfume from his lady’s bower
Who on this word put in his merry mien
And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the stout heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

The rogue in scarlet and grey soon knew his mind
He wished to get his trophy and depart
With gentle apology and touch refined
He pierced him and produced the captain’s
heart.

God’s mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
I thought him sirs an honest gentleman
Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
Let jangling kites eat of him if they can.

But God's deep curses follow after those
That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
And eyes that had not watered seventy years.

The curse of hell upon the sleek upstart
That got the captain finally on his back
And took the red red vitals of his heart
And made the kites to whet their beaks clack
clack.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM.

EMILY HARDCASTLE, SPINSTER

WE shall come tomorrow morning, who were not
to have her love,

Bringing not the face of envy, but a gift of
praise and lilies

To the stately ceremonial we are not the heroes of.

Let the sisters now attend her, who are red-eyed,
who are wroth;

They were younger, she was finer, for they
wearied of the waiting

And they married them to merchants, being
unbelievers both.

I was dapper when I dangled in my pepper-and-
salt;

We were proper local beauties, and we beauti-
fully trusted

If the proud one had to tarry we would take her
by default.

But right across the threshold has her Grizzled
Baron come;

Let them wrap her as a princess, who will
patter down a stairway,

Where the foreigner may take her for his gloomy
Halidom.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM.

WONDER

COLLIE puppies in a dooryard,
Wheeling along lopsided,
So hard to manage those hind legs,
Standing, blue eyes on nothing,
Noses twitching,
Stubby tails in the air,
Trying to remember what they are thinking about:

Fat puppies that forget everything,
Even the terrible
White teeth their mother yops at them
When she eats her supper:

Fat puppies full of wonder
At round holes where spiders live,
At the wide wings of a yellow butterfly,
And lifting shrill voices of wonder
At the stranger who leans over their gate
Making uncouth noises.

BERNARD RAYMUND.

TOILET, OR THE ART OF POETRY

"Helen was not up, was she?" — PANDARUS.

HELEN sleeps still, her stockings lie,
Black branches, on a snowy sky.
From Troy's hearths rise faint trees of smoke
Out of the needs of common folk.

But now her mind is a green glade
Where wanders a quite harmless maid,
Nursing the still fire in her blood
In mere wanton lassitude.

Through grape-dark veins wind-softly ran
Death's inobtrusive caravan,
From breast to breast and lips to feet
As though along a falling street.

The pool her image falls upon
Holds fast as ice that captive swan.
Lilies in mirrored branches wrought
Are Joys entangled in her thought.

The mirror of the mind is filled
In trance with blossoms none have willed
To lift up from its silver slime
Clear brows that pierce the glass of time.

And when she leaves her secret ways,
Gowned in a slender, silken phrase,
Doomed Body's sentinels appear,
With trees and stars, fast-frozen here.

EDGELL RICKWORD.

THE GARDEN OF THE NATIONS (1923)

WHEN we that are the bitten flower and fruit
Of time's achievement are undone between
The blight above, where blight has always been,
And the old worm of evil at the root,
We shall not have to crumble destitute
Of recompense, or measure our chagrin;
We shall be dead, and so shall not be seen
Amid the salvage of our disrepute.

And when we are all gone, shall mightier seed
And scions of a warmer spring put forth
A bloom and fruitage of a larger worth
Than ours? God save the garden, if by chance,
Or by approved short sight, more numerous weeds
And weevils be the next inheritance!

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON.

THE SHEAVES

WHERE long the shadows of the wind had rolled,
Green wheat was yielding to the change assigned,
And as by some vast magic undivined
The world was turning slowly into gold;
Like nothing that was ever bought or sold
It waited there, the body and the mind,
And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more, the more it is not told.

So in a land where all days are not fair,
Fair days went on till on another day
A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,
Shining and still, but not for long to stay —
As if a thousand girls with golden hair
Might rise from where they slept and go away.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON.

CITY FEAR

LAST night,
Standing outside the door of my house
I saw the white face of the city, lying asleep in the
mist
Dreaming, with blind eyes turned inward.
Last night,
Listening outside the door of my house I heard
The silence of the dreaming city
Listening and attending to its dream.
Rigidly the lamp-posts waited in stiff rows, silent.
And the street-lamps spread white blotches in
the mist;
Hoo . . . on the river a ferry-boat . . . hoo . . .
While on the roof-tops the cats
Paused, paw in air. . . .
Sheltered in silence, the listening city
Cowered and trembled lest Terror be loosened;
Clung to its dream lest the red ghost of Fear
Leap from the darkness, clamoring,
Bound and ricochet down the empty avenues,
Scatter the cats on the roof-tops,
Flicker the lights of the sentinel lamp-posts,
Beat on the faces of sleepers until
Up through the roofs a million voices rise.
Wailing, "I am alone,"
Screaming, "I am afraid!"

J. RORTY.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

THE bluebells lapped about her feet,
As in a lake she stood.
A lover took her hands, he took
Her heart out with a gospel look:
They kissed in the beech wood.

Night hurried down the lamplit street;
I climbed a broken stair.
Below we heard the traffic pass;
One candle gleamed in a cracked glass,
It gleamed on golden hair.

For lips to kiss are no more sweet
In the country than the town:
Where the sun strikes through cool green gloom,
Or where into a little room
A few cold stars gaze down.

GEORGE RYLANDS.

TUSCANY

CISTERNS and stones; the fig-tree in the wall
Casts down her shadow, ashen as her boughs,
Across the road, across the thick white dust.
Down from the hill the slow white oxen crawl,
Dragging the purple waggon heaped with must,
With scarlet tassels on their milky brows,
Gentle as evening moths. Beneath the yoke
Lounging against the shaft they fitful strain
To draw the waggon on its creaking spoke,
And all the vineyard folk
With staves and shouldered tools surround the
wain.

The wooden shovels take the purple stain,
The dusk is heavy with the wine's warm load;
Here the long sense of classic measure cures
The spirit weary of its difficult pain;
Here the old Bacchic piety endures,
Here the sweet legends of the world remain.
Homeric waggons lumbering the road;
Virgilian litanies among the bine;
Pastoral sloth of flocks beneath the pine;
The swineherd watching, propped upon his goad,
Under the chestnut trees the rootling swine —
Who could so stand, and see this evening fall,
This calm of husbandry, this redolent tilth,
This terracing of hills, this vintage wealth,
Without the pagan sanity of blood
Mounting his veins in young and tempered health?
Who could so stand, and watch processional
The vintners, herds, and flocks in dusty train
Wend through the golden evening to regain
The terraced farm and trodden threshing-floor
Where late the flail

Tossed high the maize in scud of gritty ore,
And lies half-buried in the heap of grain —
Who could so watch, and not forget the rack
Of wills worn thin and thought become too frail,
Nor roll the centuries back
And feel the sinews of his soul grow hale,
And know himself for Rome's inheritor?

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

MARTYRDOMS

SINCE thought is life, God's martyrdoms were
good,

And saints are trumps, no matter what they did.
Therefore I celebrate Sebastian's blood,
And glory with Lorenzo on his grid
And likewise with all victims, bruised by boulders,
Stabbed with sadistic swords, on pikes impaled,
Who propped their Paradise on bleeding shoulders
And bred tumultuous pomps when princes failed.

They died for gentle Jesus and His dreamed
Utopia. From a crookèd Roman cross,
Heavenward through crimson clouds their
conquest streamed
To touch His lips in everlasting loss.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

YOUTH VISITS OUR INFERNO

THEY call this hell. With deep disapprobation
For all of us, honest sinner and lusty saint,
Our visitors find us mildewed with the taint
Of old commandments. Their new dispensation
Has come too late for us and our salvation.
They find us pitiful and rather quaint
In our inferno . . . I make no complaint,
I am happier here with all my generation.

We are damned with the knowledge of good and
evil, they
Whose new estate is freedom, suffer worse
And find life empty, trivial and boring,
A sort of game that everyone must play,
And no one knows the rules, and no one's scoring,
And nothing's at stake, for youth has lost its
purse.

MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT.

INFANT SPRING

SOFT and pure fell the snow,
Pure, soft, the new lamb lay.
February in the field,
 Sun's heat far away,
Wave's cry sad and strange,
Lamb's cry weak and wild,
No buds in the bleak thorn hedge:
 Spring is but a tiny child.

FREDEGOND SHOVE.

THE GARDENER

(From "*The Princess in the Sleeping Wood*")

THE gardener was dark as tongues of nightingales
That in the wide leaves tell a thousand Grecian
tales

And sleep in golden nets of summer light.
"Sweet fig," he called me, and would stay the
flight

Of plums that seemed Jove's golden feathered
rain.
Then birds, like Fortunatus, moved again

Among the boughs with silent feathered feet,
Spraying down dew like jewels among the sweet

Green darkness; figs, each like a purse of gold,
Grow among leaves like rippled water green and
cold.

"Beneath those laden boughs," the gardener
sighs,
"Dreaming in endlessness, forgotten beauty lies."

EDITH SITWELL.

YESTERDAY

SWEET was my childish life to me
Like the first spring dream of a hawthorn tree . . .
Every night an ancient crone
Crooked, silver-flowered as a thorn,
Came as quietly as the moon
Through the frosty night, with her old lanthorn,
And put my childish self to bed
With all the dreams that nest in my head.
And the moon's shadows were silvery seen
As hawthorn blossoms, perfumed flowers
The glamour of beauty that never has been —
With petals falling through the night hours;
And as the old crone spoke to me
Night seemed a flowering Chinese wave
That bore me to each cloudy cave
Where there are mysteries none may see, —
In far Thibet and Persia; words
Grew into lands unknown, where birds
Were singing in an unknown tongue
Of loveliness for ever young.
Then in the morning an aged sage
Tall and thin as a cloudy cage
Came, and we looked below at the eaves
Where cool airs float like lotus leaves
And the crystal grass-blades of the rain
Trembling grow to music again.
He said, "We are wingless, can only infer
What even the smallest birds can see.
Outside in their nests they begin to be, —
A spark of fire, and grass-like frondage
In crystal eggs as hard as the air. . . .
They break, as instinct from earth-bondage
When man was sightless, before thoughts were.
And the music that birds know, to me is unheard

Though my head seems the egg of an extinct bird
And my hair seems the crystal grass-blades of the
rain

Upon the forlorn blue cliffs of the Day
Trembling and growing to music again.
But my heart still dreams that the warmth of
spring

Will stir in its thickets, begin to sing
In the lonely crystal egg of my head —
Though it seems all the lovely wings are dead
And only pity and love are left
In my wintry heart, of its wings bereft."

.

Though I am lonely now and old,
Those rare birds with their strange songs bless
My heart with spring's warm loveliness, —
It never withered grows nor cold.
For the unfledged thoughts within my brain
Sing in their sad and wintry nest,
Singing their loveliest, singing their best
Of a world that is yet undreamt, unborn,
Where never a shade is of cruelty or scorn —
Those wild birds sing in an unknown tongue
Of blossoming worlds for ever young!

EDITH SITWELL.

THE SPIDER IN EARLY SPRING

HUNGRY he is, and old,
And dreads the draughtly cold,
Spare is his web, and still
The breezes rustle chill,
Thro' his threadbare gown they win him;
The flies have fled,
He hath not fed,
And his stomach is strange within him;
So he gathers his arms and legs together,
And curses the frosty weather.

FRANK PENN SMITH.

ADVICE TO A CLAM-DIGGER

An American Georgic

Go when the friendly moon permits the tides
To drop far out at early morn or eve;
When eel-grass lies in windrows on the flats,
And rockweed lays its khaki counterpanes
On barnacles that cling to sunken ledges;
Seek out a place where mud-enameled sand
Looks like a colander whose holes emit
Little salt water geysers when you step;
Then, facing shoreward, dig till you become
A lame and muddy partner of the cove.

Marvels undreamed of suddenly unfold
The secrets they have kept concealed so long:
The rancid mud-clams whose white shells betray
A worthlessness within, like beggar's gold,
Or empty conkles farther up the beach;
The iridescent clam-worms blue and green
With esculating red and yellow fringes,
Like Chinese dragons whose soft tentacles
Expand, contract, and writhe in oozy slime;
Long buried whore's-eggs; razor-fish with shells
Brown as old ivory and smooth as glass;
Or soggy timbers from a derelict
Who left her oaken bones upon a ledge
In some northeaster forty years ago.

You soon discover that the best returns
Lie nestled near the rocks that dot the cove:
Dig slowly there, lest you should break their shells,
For at a single forkful three or four
Will lay white buttocks bare before your eyes.
Protruding heads that keep a passage clear,
Aware of you, will scramble for their homes,

Spraying your eyes and face with stinging brine,
Engendering illusion that the shells
Are burrowing a fathom deep in mud.
Their flight is aided by the tousling in
Of saucy waters playing hide-and-seek
In every drain and crevice of the flats,
Laughing at your attempts to keep them out,
And salvaging rich treasure for the sea.

Your roller full, haul up your rubber boots
And wade into the green and golden cove
Where little flounders flit beneath your feet.
Pull bits of rockweed, Mother Ocean's facecloths,
And wash the thick-accumulated mud
From off your hoe handle; then souse your hod
And watch the shades of blue intensify:
The sparkling freshness on the dripping shells
Which disappears as suddenly as dew
From violets or daisies in the sun,
Will teach you why the Indian long ago
Used these fair shells for ornaments and wampum,
And piled them in the self-same spot for years,
Until his heaped-up mounds were monuments
Where all spring wanderers might come and camp.

Fail not before you leave to glance around
And view the low-tide pageant of the shore:
The apprehensive manner of a gull
Who sits with white breast bulging to the breeze,
And flashes right and left his sulphur bill;
The slower movements of the pearl-gray crane
Who stands in eel-grass on a single leg,
Surveys the fishing prospects, then moves on,
To light again, survey, and move once more,
Till he has sounded out the channel's length;
The yellow bubbles on the flood tide making

A creamy dressing for the green sea-lettuce;
The dignity of rusty-iron rocks
Studded with bands of sharp white barnacles;
The breakers, if the wind blows hard off shore,
That chase each other on the sunken reefs,
And spout like white whales on an Arctic sea;
Or, if the earth be hushed to twilight calm,
The violet, dark-wine, and purple tints
That crown the flowing surface of the tide.

WILBERT SNOW.

POMPEIAN QUATRAIN
NEW EXCAVATIONS

A WORKMAN with his spade in half a day
Can push two thousand lagging years away;
See, how the tragic villas, one by one,
Like sleepy lizards, creep into the sun.

LEONORA SPEYER.

THE OXFORD OWL

To H.V. F. S.

GRIM Oxford Owl, supremely wise,
What high scholastic enterprise
Hath brought thee hither? — did thy mind
The native wisdom of thy kind
Deem insufficient? — art thou yearning
To feed on Oxford's heavy learning? —
And what would thy glum fancy be:
Lame text,— or bald epigraphy?

Thou hast the academic bent,
Night is thy native element:
When townsmen drowse, then in the trees
One of thine eccentricities
It is to sit and think and think
Until the stars o'er-wearied sink
Into their Cumnor beds, until
The moon nods off by Wytham Hill;
But thou dost twit the night away,
And then art dull and bored all day.

What means this unmelodious noise,
This odd, yet half familiar voice?
Have I not known a don or two
Who mostly spake by twit and twoo?
What mean the studious hours you keep
And morning tendency to sleep?
I know thee now,— no feathered fowl,
But ghostly don, returned, old owl.

O phantom gownsman in the trees,
Now mooning o'er our colleges,
From Queen's to Balliol,— on to John's,
Thou hootest for thy fellow dons:

Haunting these time-encrusted places,
And seeking eighteenth-century faces,
Hard by yon glimmering panes thy flitting
Ends in this ruminative sitting
High in the frosted wintry boughs,
Where with wide eyes and arching brows
Thou seest our dusty Dean explore
The same old dusty leathery lore;
Whereon thou well dost vent thy views
In these maturely pondered twos.

W. FORCE STEAD.

THE GHOST

To Osborn Bergin

Do not salute me, I am not your friend;
The man whose face I seem to bear is dead,
I am his ghost.

If it could grieve his friends, or had he been
In debt to them, how quickly they had heard
That he was dead.

Ye deem I show not as an airy sprite,
Or phantom, thinly shuddering again
To its old shape.

Your seven senses all are witch'd away,
This shape that ye salute is but the ghost,
The soulless one.

That ye know not ye greet as it were known!
Ye greet a goblin! Woe to him that shall
Be haunted by me!

Although I tell and tell the tale, ye dream
I am not dead — but I remember well
The day I died.

Should he complain who by an angel face,
And angel vision, was translated
Deathlessly?

Could he outlive the wonder and the beauty
That slays all men? He saw that loveliness
And must be dead.

He fell not out in strife nor died in woe,
A very wildest wildness of delight
Hath blinded him.

Not misery nor hate had fetched him down,
Not love, nor love for her — terror it was
That killed him.

The terror of her beauty slew that man:
He comes all icily from life, and hears
He is not dead.

He will not tell her lips that did not dare
To look on them — but what his eye dared not
His mind's eye saw.

Remembering him, let no man brood upon
Her brow, her cheek — a ghost, a wailing woe
That man will be.

This death was painless, death by her again
Might well be dreadful — O God! forbid
She raise her dead!

The Hound of Connacht once that man was called:
His name and fame were known
Among the wise.

JAMES STEPHENS.

(After the Irish of Cú Connacht O'Cléirí.)

IN THE ORCHARD

"I THOUGHT you loved me."

"No, it was only fun."

"When we stood there, closer than all?"

"Well, the harvest moon
Was shining and queer in your hair, and it turned
my head."

"*That* made you?"

"Yes."

"Just the moon and the light it made
Under the tree?"

"Well, your mouth too . . ."

"Yes, my mouth?"

"And the quiet there that sang like the drum in
the booth.

You shouldn't have danced like that."

"Like what?"

"So close,
With your head turned up, and the flower in your
hair, a rose

That smelt all warm."

"I loved you. I thought you knew
I wouldn't have danced like that with any but
you."

"I didn't know, I thought you knew it was fun."

"I thought it was love you meant."

"Well, it's done."

"Yes, it's done.
I've seen boys stone a blackbird, and watched
them drown

A kitten . . . it clawed at the reeds, and they
pushed it down

Into the pool while it screamed: Is that fun, too?"

"Well, boys are like that . . . Your brothers . . ."

"Yes, I know."

But you, so lovely and strong . . . Not you! Not you!"

"They don't understand it's cruel, it's only a game."

"And are girls fun, too?"

"No, still in a way it's the same.
It's queer and lovely to have a girl . . ."

"Go on."

"It makes you mad for a bit to feel she's your own,
And you laugh and kiss her, and maybe you give
her a ring;

But it's only in fun . . ."

"But I gave you everything."

"Well, you shouldn't have done it — you know
what a fellow thinks

When a girl does that."

"Yes, he talks of her over his drinks
And calls her a —"

"Stop that, now! . . . I thought you knew."

"But it wasn't with anyone else — it was only
you."

"How did I know? I thought you wanted it too —
I thought you were like the rest. Well, what's to
be done?"

"To be done?"

"Is it all right?"

"Yes."

"Sure?"

"Yes, but why?"

"I don't know — I thought you were going to
cry —

You said you had something to tell me."

"Yes, I know.

It wasn't anything really . . . I think I'll go."

"Yes, it's late, there's thunder about, a drop of
rain

Fell on my hand just now. I'll see you again
At the dance next week. You're sure that every-
thing's right?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll be going."

"Kiss me . . ."

"Good night."

"Good night."

MURIEL STUART.

A PARABLE OF PARADISE

THERE'LL be a glassy paradise
Where all will have their crowns of ice,
And all will wear their robes of snow;
And the trees will bow and the winds will blow —
And men will falter to and fro.

Men will prowl like timid beasts
Hungry after a hundred feasts
And break the bracken down in the woods,
Crash and fret and gaze and spy —
And look for nothing, low and high.

Then they will shiver, and go to sleep . . .

To sleep, to sleep, and toss and sigh —
Sprawled they will mutter where they lie,
And sit up rigid, and wonder why.

They seem to stretch and never wake:
There is a glaze they cannot break
To the world outside or the inner eye;
Oh, how they retch and cannot ache,
Oh, how they try and cannot weep —
And there's nothing to do but shiver and sleep.

This weight of nothingness is more
Than any planet stood before.
Shades and empty clouds will gather
Tons of fret in weight of weather,
Till under the burden of this lack
Obeisant earth will warp and crack,
Open a wound to bleed them terror.

Lava, lava. Slow and thick
Earth oozes, shudders, and is sick.

How they will gape at the molten stone,
Take earth's illness for their own,
And groan . . .

There they will stand, stormed by pain,
The obscene flood, the lewd stain.

Across the glassy zones of ice
Comes the long writhe and the slow hiss,
Sluggish red, the fire's kiss —
Snaky mark in paradise.

And who is this delivers them?
The serpent, yea, the very same
Who was their doom and shame.

Cast down your haughty diadem.
Your paradisal diadem,
Into the lava flame.

Now all the pent-up rivers run
In head-long silence under sun;
And miracle, oh, miracle,
The silver fluid in their veins
Is moving in a miracle:

In them their own volcanoes seethe,
And their bright bodies breathe . . .

And fixedly as in a spell
They watch the serpent writhe, and wreathe
Over the earth, and on to smite
The glassy sea — and the marble, white
Stone sea uplifts a mist of light.

Oh, what marvels they behold:
The mountains settling, fold on fold,

Cliffs that melt, and rivers gold,
And mists like angels rising slowly,
Singing holy, holy, holy.

They are not souls, but flesh at last,
And the rent earth, under the ice,
Dearer than any paradise —
Into the sea their crowns they cast,
Into the air go up their cries,
With joy they rend their snowy guise,
And now they wait, transfixed with awe,
By the white sea — by the red flaw. . . .

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

AUTUMN DUSK

I SAW above a sea of hills
A solitary planet shine,
And there was no one, near or far,
To keep the world from being mine.

SARA TEASDALE.

FOREKNOWN

THEY brought me with a secret glee
The news I knew before they spoke,
And though they hoped to see me riven,
They found me light as red leaves driven
Before the storm that splits an oak.

For I had learned from many an autumn
The way a leaf can drift and go —
Lightly, lightly, almost gay,
Taking the unreturning way
To mix with winter and the snow.

SARA TEASDALE.

THE WEATHER-VANE

O STEEPLE-COCK, stoop down to me
And tell me what you see afar!
*A sail that flickers on the sea
No bigger than a star.*

O make your fledge a beacon, fowl,
And let your wings be lanterns both!
*Afar I see the tempest scowl,
And all the waves are wroth.*

Look well again, good steeple-cock,
And can you see her lantern-spark?
*Nay, now she runs upon a rock,
And founders in the dark.*

O steeple-cock, say one is saved,
One only lad that shall not drown!
*I saw a sudden hand that waved
But once, and then went down.*

Fly, steeple-cock, with my true pledge,
And say I love him, ere he die!
*Too heavy is my golden fledge,
Good lass! I cannot fly.*

WILFRID THORLEY.

ON A PIECE OF NOTEPAPER IN AN
OLDHAM HOTEL

I KNOW a field with horses ploughing,
The sky's road spread for a troop of cloud,
And a long wind in the elm trees, singing
The pride of life to the proud.

The proud life of the happy ploughman,
The proud look-back to the furrows' meet,
The finches flocked to a thankful feeding,
The thankful earth to his feet.

Here my heart aches for the wan, grey faces,
The clattering feet, the loveless eyes,
And the long toil up the stony furrows
Where the grey day droops and dies.

E. TEMPLE THURSTON.

BEATEN PATHS

THE Soul

Released from the blue flesh, sure of its goal,
Leaped to the angel messenger, who came
With wings thin-tipped and quivering,
Foam-white and radiant. The new-fledged thing—
The naked Soul, breathed low a Name.
The angel, calm as votive candle flame,
Nodded.

Then the flight
Into the heart of night.

“O beautiful! The shadowed cliffs of space,
The rush of meteors, the worlds that run
Around a fluid and tumultuous sun!
O the swift race
Past moons of ice, and sapphire gulfs, the bed
Of dark-red stars gone dead!

“O beautiful! O ecstasy unknown
On the lost Earth below!
O all-prevailing flow
Of wind like water over Chaos blown!”

So the Soul sang in high, sweet overtone.

But the grave angel with dark level eyes
Proceeded on his way to Paradise
In unabating flight. . . . “that purple sun
The half-way mark. . . . turn off where roll the
five
Cold crystal stars. . . . where the long streamers
run
From Hell, go high and wide. . . .”

So the accustomed trail the angel guide
Followed, and heeded not the ecstatic Soul. . . .
All Souls behaved like that. . . . He reached his
goal,
And by the Gate, where the gray tempests die,
Deposited his burden with a sigh.

ETHEL TURNER.

THE DREAM AND THE BLOOD

Go back, dark blood, to the springs from which
you came.

Go back, though each mutinous drop swells
upward in flood.

What! Am I nothing more now than a wave of
onrushing flame?

Nothing but sport of my pulse? Back, back,
dark blood!

Am I not master here in my own house of flesh?

Cease roaring and rising. Be still, I tell you;
be still.

I have work that calls for cool evenings; I have
stuff of the mind to thresh.

Must you pit your unreasoning hunger against
my determinate will?

I tell you this body for which we are always
contending

Is more than mere fuel for you to be turned
into ash.

It was shaped by white visions of leaving its bones,
of extending

Itself into realms where your heat would be less
than a flash.

What! Will you not even listen? I hear you,
O hater

Of all that I plan. I hear how the thud

In my veins beats your victory . . . Later, then,
later.

Give me myself for an hour. Go back, dark
blood.

LOUIS UNTERMAYER.

THE WAGGONER'S MATE

CLEAR graven in my mind, now I am gone
From Broadoaks far, I carry still the image
Of young Tom Throstle. Not a day went by
But I would meet him in the narrow lane.
One mare he rode, the others following after;
And with his hand he clasped a spare sack, thrown
Over his shoulders to shield off the rain
That dripped from yellowing elms; and ever Tom
Whistled some crazy ditty as he passed.
Still do I picture his wide open eyes
Innocent as the morning, his clear brow:
And for the lack of innocent eye, and brow
So placid, in the city where I wander,
His image grows but brighter in my mind.

Not his the wide horizons that they know
Who press about me here; not his their pleasures.
Hour after hour he trod the furrowed field,
Hearing no other voice but the old ploughman's
With whom he worked. Hour after hour he knew
No greater wonder than the changing skies
Making for sun or rain; or the birds passing
In serried flock as winter hurried on.
In the quiet village of his uncouth fathers
His every pleasure lay, his every care;
Who dwelt too near to ingle-loving Age
In the white cottage at the wood's lone clearing;
Who had for playfellow Mirth-stealing Sadness
And knew too soon Death chilly brushing by.

Yet when to memory his image starts,
Not sorrowing I see him — though I know
How dark the sorrow of those early years.
Great though his loss, his heritage was greater

Who from the beauty of the growing woods
Circling his home, and from the open meadows,
And from the rude lore of his rough forefathers
Drew, as from a fount of shining waters,
Peace and the bounty of a quiet mind.
Something was his of that far single purpose
Whereby his fathers set their hamlet-spire
Twining the blue air — those men who knew
The subtle inspiration of the spirit
Filling the peace of their unfevered lives.

So, brightly still, across the years, Tom Throstle
Answers my greeting in the twilight lane;
And pipes along the streets of this loud city
A little crazy melody of peace.

C. HENRY WARREN.

PAWNBROKERS

God bless pawnbrokers!
They are quiet men.
You may go once —
You may go again —
They do not question
As a brother might;
They never say
What they think is right;
They never hint
All you ought to know;
Lay your treasure down,
Take your cash and go,
Fold your ticket up
In a secret place
With your shaken pride
And your shy disgrace,
Take the burly world
By the throat again —
God bless pawnbrokers!
They are quiet men.

MARGUERITE WILKINSON.

THE farmer in deep thought
is pacing through the rain
among his blank fields, with
hands in pockets,
in his head
the harvest already planted.
A cold wind ruffles the water
among the browned weeds.
On all sides
the world rolls coldly away:
black orchards
darkened by the March clouds —
leaving room for thought.
Down past the brushwood
bristling by
the rainsluiced wagon-road
looms the artist figure of
the farmer — composing
— antagonist.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS.

THE MONUMENTS

WESTMINSTER ABBEY. I

SINCE the rich and successful are apter
to commend themselves to the Chapter,
there's no place for the broken and shabby
dead in Westminster Abbey.
But in every niche and corner
the bust of a dead Jack Horner
says to the other ghosts drifting by
'Don't you wish you had been as clever as I,
while he plunges his thumb into Kingdom Come.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY. II

BUT the spirit of Westminster Abbey
says to the broken and shabby,
'When you were living, they made me harden
my heart, but now I ask your pardon,
poor dead, who, smaller than a mouse,
scuffle about your father's house.
My aisles for you are dim, my nave
has the high silence of the grave,
and my great windows will not let
the sun affright you, nor moon forget.
There is more joy in heaven, poor dead,
for one shamed spirit comforted,
for one lost life that finds in death
peace passing that of Nazareth
than for an emperor, whose crown
is for death's diadem laid down,
and though for all, yet most for them
my organ sobs her 'Requiem'."

HUMBERT WOLFE.

KING'S RANSOM

ABOUT the Emperor's thumb revolving,
Mouthed by Manchu's enamelled dragon;
Upon the damasked barge, dissolving
Within the deep Egyptian flagon;

Downcast before the swine by Circe;
Poised between double diamond prisms;
Clipped by the horse-shoe nail that hearsay
Declares a cure for rheumatisms;

If the artificer be Vulcan
Or microscopical Cellini
To set an eyeball for a falcon
Or carve a button for a genie, —

And whether cupped in gold or copper,
In frigid silver or the burly
Embrace of bronze; stained by the upper
Cloud colors, or profound sea-pearly, —

Whether consuming or congealing
In fire or salt, O never shall you
Find an enchantment for concealing
This little moon's enormous value!

ELINOR WYLIE.

UNWILLING ADMISSION

HERE is the deep admission, whose profound
And difficult verity is out of reach
For loose adventure and impatient speech;
How, lying on your heart, I have not found
Treason nor failure in its mortal sound:
It is not necessary to beseech
A bodily vow to bind us each to each
Whose veins are rooted in heroic ground.

In such uncounted piercing of your side
Some river in heaven overbrimmed and broke,
And your least courage wore a lion's pride:
No several hammer of your pulses spoke,
Save to affirm, "The brave have never died."
Though you and I must die at every stroke.

ELINOR WYLIE.

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